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OF
ENGLAND,
FROM THE
ACCESSION TO THE DECEASE
OF
KING GEORGE THE THIRD.

BY JOHN ADOLPHUS, ESQ.

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PREFACE

TO

THE FOURTH VOLUME.

IN entering on a period beyond that to which I had formerly directed my attention, I am anxious to explain myself on one point. It may appear to some readers, that I have treated with too much minuteness of detail the transactions and politics of foreign countries. To those who may be disposed to censure me on this account, I have only to represent that every act, and every expression, which occurred in the early periods of the French Revolution had great influence over the conduct and sentiments of almost all persons in Great Britain, where ancient friendships were broken, new connexions established, vehement opinions professed, and dangerous or protective associations instituted, in consequence of the opposite feelings which were excited by this momentous event. It has been my endeavour to investigate closely, and to describe faithfully, those acts and intrigues by which beneficial alliances were dissolved, states led to forego their political independence, kingdoms dismembered or abolished, and the face of the civilized world totally changed. In this great struggle, the opinions of individuals have often been as effective as the achievements of military or naval commanders; and I have considered it important to develope with all possible exactness, on the one side, those means by which the existence of monarchy and established government in general was made unpopular and odious; and, on the other, those acts of aggression, spoliation, and injustice, on the European continent, by which the cause of monarchy was disgraced, and the support of it rendered difficult.

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THE
HISTORY OF ENGLAND.

GEORGE THE THIRD.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FOURTH.

1783.

General view of the late belligerent powers.—Mr. Hartley corresponds with Dr. Franklin on the subject of a commercial treaty.—Progress of the negotiation—American loyalists provided for by Great Britain.—Condition of the American Congress—of the army.—Memorials to Congress.—Prudence of Washington.—The army disbanded.—Washington's farewell—His retreat with honours and acclamations.—Observations on his character.—He refuses to accept the title of King.—Society of Cincinnati.—Debts and embarrassments of America.—Commerce.—Powers of Europe.—France.—Spain.—Holland.—Conduct of the Imperial Courts.—Great Britain.—Interview of Mr. Adams with the King.

GREAT BRITAIN having now emerged from the most extraordinary contest in which a nation had ever engaged, and respecting the termination of which the most gloomy forebodings had been entertained, it is necessary to review her situation in comparison with other powers, and particularly those with whom she had been engaged in hostilities.

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General view
of the late bel-
ligerent pow-
ers.

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America.

Among these, America first claims attention, as well because she was the original source of contest, as from the novelty of her political relation to other states. Colonies, planted and formed, fostered, protected, and enriched by the mother country, had emancipated themselves from her restraint, and formed a separate and independent establishment. To Catholic and despotic monarchs Protestant republicans were indebted for that support which enabled them to maintain principles of hatred and contempt of kings, to spurn at all rule but that of a legislative elective body, and to associate with the ideas of freedom and natural right, those of republicanism and natural equality. If, from motives of gratitude, the newly created commonwealth might be expected to court continual alliance, and give exclusive preference to France and Spain, other causes, not less cogent, naturally tended to regenerate partialities toward Great Britain. No part of the history of America was obscure or uncertain; the period to which other nations are obliged to refer their origin, commonly called "the night of time," with them had no existence. They stood in the society of nations as mere strangers; they had no association but what had arisen during the late contest, no origin or antecedent history which connected them with royal houses or illustrious families; no original institutions or historical recollections, to which they could recur as founding claims to high consideration. Every record, every reminiscence brought back their ancient connexion, their indisputable origination; and if the heat of party, or the perversion of historical fact, for the purposes of supposed advantage, sanctioned momentary misrepresentations of the conduct and motives of the parent state, the more imperishable and never-failing records of language, customs, manners, and jurisprudential forms, would always certify that the establishment of the Americans as a people, and the foundation of their most valuable social institutes, were derived from Great Britain. To these, at every period of the revolution, and in every project of a new government, they inflexibly adhered. Trial by jury,

senatorial representation, liberty of the press, and habeas corpus, were, in their definition, not modes of administration, but natural rights of man; and, when they had attained independence founded on these principles, it was natural to expect that every motive arising from similarity of principles, wants, feelings, and exertions, would induce attachment to, and preference of, Great Britain.

But these causes could not be speculated on as likely to produce immediate effects. Although the terms of peace with the United States were remarkably liberal in the articles of limits, fisheries, and indeed in every other respect, the condition of the country was neither settled nor enviable.

In the eager desire of the British ministry and people to derive exclusive advantages from a new connexion with America, the wildest sallies of imagination were indulged. Instead of viewing the United States in the situation they had elected, as a foreign country, some persons defined them by the whimsical term of a people *sui generis*; systems were preferred to experience, rash theory to successful practice, and attempts were even sanctioned for abandoning the navigation act, the guardian of British prosperity; but the excellent deliberative forms of British legislation, and the wholesome freedom of the press, prevented this fatal delusion from producing its worst effects. By wisdom in discussing the bills presented to Parliament, the evils to be apprehended from a too hasty decision were averted; and the temporary power vested in the sovereign afforded time for obtaining the benefits of experience, instead of forming a rash judgment on the basis of mere speculation*. The press was no less judiciously employed in obviating popular errors, and proving, by the best arguments, drawn from analogy, comparison, and calculation, that the greatest advantages would be derived from American commerce, not

* Observations on the Commerce of America, by Lord Sheffield. This was the most distinguished and useful production on the subject. It was read with avidity at the time, and can never be perused but with advantage and instruction. See, also, Opinions on Interesting Subjects, by George Chalmers, Esq.

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Mr. Hartley
corresponds
with Dr. Fran-
klin.

March 12.

April 19.
Progress of the
negotiation

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by wild eagerness or imprudent sacrifices, but by liberality mingled with prudence, and by a firm tenaciousness of the rights of Great Britain, without too jealously precluding the claims of America.

Mr. Hartley, with the approbation of the party who then expected to form the government*, opened a correspondence with his friend, Dr. Franklin, suggesting that, as there would be no material point for discussion in America after the British troops were withdrawn, that event might take place before the signature of the definitive treaty, and commissioners might then negotiate a provisional convention of commerce, to take place immediately. The leading points which he proposed in a treaty were, that all ports in both countries should be mutually opened, all prohibitory acts repealed, and British vessels admitted into American harbours on the same footing as before the war. It was to be added, as a separate article, that the independence of America was not to be considered as creating Aliens; "but that the subjects of each country should mutually be considered as natural born, and intitled to all consequent rights and privileges†."

When the new ministry was established, Mr. Fox wrote to Dr. Franklin, recommending Mr. Hartley to his full confidence; and a correspondence was continued until after the definitive treaty was signed. In this interval, it was found that a repeal of many statutes would be necessary before a commercial arrangement could be formed; and therefore a proclamation was issued, interdicting direct trade between America and the West Indies, which seems to have given great offence to Dr. Franklin, or at least to have afforded an opportunity of shewing his rancour. If the effect of the proclamation were not superseded by the definitive treaty, he said, it would be a matter worthy the attentive discussion of Congress, whether it would be most

* This was the Coalition party. The letter was written during the ministerial interregnum.

† This very absurd notion, that a nation could be independent and not alien, enjoying all the privileges of subjects, but owing no allegiance, was, for a time, favoured by some politicians; but more exact and rational views were afterward adopted.

prudent to retort with a similar regulation, in order to force its repeal, which might probably bring on another quarrel, or let it pass without notice, and leave it to its own inconvenience, or rather impracticability in its execution, and to the complaints of the West India planters, who must, under the restrictions, pay dearly for the produce of America*.

That this negotiation should be unsuccessful, can occasion little surprise, when it is recollected that we had to treat with Dr. Franklin, whose hatred of England and sympathy with France had so long been conspicuous. He affected to believe that the character of that court and nation was, of late years, considerably changed; that ideas of aggrandizement by conquest were out of fashion, and those of commerce more enlightened and generous than before; and he hoped soon to feel the prevalence of this system by the admission of his country to a great freedom of trade with her islands.

At the same time that he expressed himself so satisfied with the friendly intentions and moderate views of France, he displayed opinions of a very opposite description respecting this country†.

Before the end of the year, a commercial treaty Dec. 25. between France and the United States was put in activity, through De La Fayette‡. "With respect to the British Court," Franklin said, "we should, I think, be constantly upon our guard, and impress strongly upon our minds, that, though it has made peace, it is not in truth reconciled to us, or to its loss of us, but still flatters itself with hopes that some change in the affairs of Europe, or some disunion among ourselves, may afford an opportunity of recovering their dominion, punishing those who have most offended, and securing our future dependence.

* Letter from Dr. Franklin to Robert R. Livingstone, Esq.; *Memoirs of Franklin*, vol. ii. p. 434.

† He expressed the bias of his mind by a cogent illustration, when he compared the conflict of attachments in the Americans between Great Britain and France to that of the Sabine women, who abandoned their fathers and adhered to their husbands. *Idem*.

‡ *Jefferson's Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 55.

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“It is easy to see, by the general turn of the ministerial newspapers (light things indeed, as straws and feathers, but like them they shew which way the wind blows), and by the malignant improvement their ministers make in all foreign courts of every little accident at Philadelphia, the resolves of some town meetings, the reluctance to pay taxes, &c. &c.; all which are exaggerated, to represent our governments as so many anarchies, of which the people themselves are weary; the Congress, as having lost its influence, being no longer respected: I say it is easy to see, from this conduct, that they bear us no good-will, and that they wish the reality of what they are pleased to imagine. They have, too, a numerous royal progeny to provide for, some of whom are educated in the military line*.”

Soon after the signature of the definitive treaty, the British troops evacuated Charlestown, New York, and the few other remaining posts. Sir Guy Carleton, for his services, received a peerage, with the title of Lord Dorchester.

Loyalists provided for by Great Britain.

Congress literally fulfilled the terms of the provisional articles, by voting a recommendation of the loyalists in the very words of the treaty; but the manner of this cold recommendation was essentially different from those ardent recommendations which, in the beginning of the contest, impelled the colonists to war against the parent state; it was in course disregarded, and the care of providing for its meritorious objects devolved on the mother country. This was not to be wondered at, considering the feelings of antipathy entertained against them by Dr. Franklin, which he expressed in terms of contumelious malignity, and the probable diffusion of them among many, through the influence of passion, prejudice, and interest†. Claims were received, under the act passed in the late session, from about three thousand heads of families, two-thirds of which were heard and determined in England, the

* The above statement is derived altogether from the *Memoirs of Dr. Franklin*, vol. ii. p. 424 to 444. The latter extract is from a letter by Dr. Franklin to Thomas Mifflin, Esq., President of Congress, dated 25th December, 1783.

† Letter from Dr. Franklin to Baron Maseres; *Memoirs*, vol. ii. p. 80.

remainder in Nova Scotia or Canada, whither commissioners were deputed. The grounds of remuneration were losses of real or personal estate, and of income arising from offices, professions, and trade.

The amount of the first species of claims exceeded ten millions sterling, from which deductions were made in small proportions, leaving always to the sufferer means of independent subsistence; the liquidations were made by instalments, interest being in the mean time allowed on the capital*.

The second class of claimants demanded a hundred and fifty thousand pounds a-year; about a hundred and twenty thousand of which were allowed, and vested in life annuities, from twenty to five hundred pounds each.

But, although the American states had obtained the desired boon of peace and independence, and secured, as public property, the spoils of the loyalists, they found their troubles not terminated, but varied. The Congress, it is true, was formed upon those principles from which some speculators expect to derive perpetual freedom, incorruptible and unvarying consistency: its members were elected annually, and could not be chosen more than three years successively, nor more than three years in seven; and any of them might be recalled at any time, whenever their constituents should be dissatisfied with their conduct. They were of the people, and returned to mix with the people, having no more durable pre-eminence than the different grains of sand in an hour-glass. Such an assembly could not become dangerous to liberty; they had no profitable appointments, but a mere payment of daily wages, scarcely equivalent to their expenses, so that, having no chance for great places and enormous salaries or pensions, as in some countries, there

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Condition of
the American
Congress.

* The deductions from the gross claims were made as follows: From sums not exceeding £10,000, no abatement; from £10,000 to 20,000, a small diminution, which was progressively augmented to the largest demands. Yet, after all drawbacks, some claimants received 50, some 70, and one £100,000. An unparalleled instance of magnanimity and justice in a nation which had expended nearly a hundred and sixteen millions in the war.

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could be no canvassing or bribery for elections*. Such were the high qualities attributed to this body by a republican writer, who was either blinded by prejudice, misled by speculation, or desirous to mislead the English gentleman to whom he addressed his observations. Another writer, not less ardently republican, gives an impression widely different, drawn from actual observation. The legislators, without remuneration or expectation, were with difficulty drawn together in numbers sufficient legally to transact business; but, if not numerous, the body was very contentious. Day after day was wasted on the most unimportant questions; and how should it be otherwise? the writer asks, in a body to which the people send a hundred and fifty lawyers, whose trade it is to question every thing, to yield nothing, and to talk by the hour†.

From these contrasted opinions, it would fairly be inferred that the body alluded to, conferring on its members neither advantage nor dignity, its business languidly attended, and its debates rather displays of noisy cleverness, than of experience and wisdom, was not confidently to be looked up to for the formation of a just constitutional system, and the establishment of an exalted character among nations.

Of the army.

The army, by which Congress had been enabled to attain their favourite objects, and who had encountered incredible hardships and privations, found themselves unrewarded and unpaid; and did not obtain even the means of a decent subsistence. With a perseverance and steadiness which cannot be too highly extolled, the army had sustained, during the whole war, fatigues and privations rarely to be paralleled. They saw their years wasting in the service, not only without the assurance of a future provision, but without even that which common justice would direct—a payment for their daily and long-continued toils. Congress, if disposed to do them justice, had not the means: they

* Franklin's Memoirs, vol. ii. p. 77.

† Jefferson's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 49.

possessed no funds, and the resource of foreign loans failed, as well from the want of security to be tendered, as the want of opulence in those who might be inclined to make advances. In 1780, Congress had passed a resolution granting half-pay for life to officers; but they could only support it by requisitions to local assemblies, which were not likely to produce their effect; nor, if contrary to all reasonable hope the supplies should be given, was it believed that Congress would sustain their original vote. The concurrence of nine provinces was necessary, and the state of the public mind did not warrant a hope that such an assent would ever be obtained. Separate applications to the different states, for which individuals had served, were suggested; but it was objected that the army, thus divided into thirteen parts, would cease to be respectable, and furnish means and pretexts of refusal.

Under these circumstances, the officers in the camp addressed a memorial to Congress, which was presented by a deputation from a general committee of the whole army. After reciting their services, and the neglect under which they laboured, they said, "Our distresses
" are brought to a point; we have borne all that men
" can bear; our property is expended; our private re-
" sources are at an end; our friends are wearied out
" and disgusted with incessant applications." They urged, therefore, an immediate remittance of money to supply the wants of the soldiers; a commutation of the half-pay promised for life, for whole pay, during a term of years, or for a sum in present money; and they cautioned the legislative body on the ill consequences which might arise from a dependence on the future forbearance of the army, exhorting them to convince the soldiery and the world that the independence of America should not be placed upon the ruins of any particular class of citizens. This impressive memorial occasioned much dissension in Congress. Some members, yielding to the calls of justice, were disposed to grant the demands of the petitioners, and to arrange those of all public creditors, as a general act of the whole community; but, on the other hand, a party,

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Memorial to
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less liberally disposed, maintained the principles of separate and sovereign control in each state, and refused to sanction an expenditure not voted by their own legislature.

Answer of
Congress.

Under such circumstances, an evasive and unsatisfactory answer was given, and the officers were disposed to adopt measures for enforcing their demands. Their minds were exasperated by some strong and passionate publications, which were called the Newburgh Addresses*. The formidable effects thus menaced, were averted through the temperance and judgment of General Washington. He first mollified the minds of the officers, in separate interviews, and afterward, in a general meeting, represented, in glowing colours, the infamy of adopting measures which would sully the glory of seven years' service. They were affected, and unanimously declared that no circumstance of distress or danger should shake their confidence in the justice of their country, and that they viewed, with abhorrence and rejected with disdain the infamous propositions of the anonymous address. General Washington was highly applauded for his conduct in this alarming crisis; and the legislative body, instructed by recent danger, offered to the officers the amount of five years' full pay in money, or in securities bearing interest at six per cent. instead of the half-pay which had been promised them for life.

10th March.
15th.
Prudence of
Washington.

22nd March.

26th May.

When the officers were satisfied, a considerable difficulty still presented itself in dispersing so large a body of soldiers; but this was evaded: Washington granted furloughs, and, after the preliminaries of peace were signed, Congress never required those who held them to return. Thus the impatience of individuals to revisit their homes diminished the risk of disbanding an unpaid army; the men, without means of meeting to confer on grievances, resumed their situations as

* So called from the place where they were written. The authorship was the subject of doubt; but it was at length avowed by the Major (afterward General) Armstrong, who was at the time Aid-de-camp to General Gates, at Newburgh. In the first of these addresses, the army were advised to assert their rights, while they still had arms in their hands. Life of General Greene, vol. ii. p. 397.

husbandmen or artificers, and forgot those demands which the country was unable to liquidate. All were not so easily satisfied; eighty of the Pennsylvania levies marched from Lancaster, and, being joined by other malcontents, to the amount of three hundred, repaired to the state-house at Philadelphia in martial array, placing guards at the doors, and threatening signal vengeance, unless their just demands were gratified within twenty minutes. Congress found means to temporize with these mutineers, until General Washington dispatched a superior force, which quelled the disturbance. Several were condemned to death and other punishments, but afterward pardoned*.

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20th.

At a late period of the year, when the numbers of the collective military body were greatly diminished by permissive absences, Congress issued a proclamation, applauding their armies for having displayed, in the progress of an arduous and difficult war, every military and patriotic virtue, thanking them for their long, eminent, and faithful services, and declaring the third of November the day of their dismissal. With great difficulty, four months' pay, in part of several years of arrears, were presented to them. On the day preceding their separation, the General issued his valedictory orders, in endearing language, imploring "the choicest" "favour of Heaven on those who, under divine auspices, "had secured innumerable blessings to others;" he announced, at the same time, his intention to retire from the service; "the curtain of separation was soon "to be drawn, and the military scene to him closed for "ever."

18th Oct.
The army
disbanded.

2nd Nov.
Washington's
farewell.

After assisting at a splendid festival on the evacuation of New York, the General took an affecting leave of his officers. At Annapolis, which was then the seat of Congress, he resigned his commission, with an animated and eloquent compliment, into the hands of the President; having previously delivered to the

15th Nov.
His retreat
with honours
and acclama-
tions.

* Beside the Histories and authenticated documents, I have derived these events from Sparks's *Life of Washington*, vol. i. p. 381 to 382; Marshall's *Life*, vol. v.; Johnson's *Life of General Greene*, vol. ii.; and Sparks's *Life of Gouverneur Morris*, vol. i. p. 249.

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Observations
on his charac-
ter.

Comptroller in Philadelphia, in his own hand-writing, an account of the public monies expended by him during the war, which did not amount to fifteen thousand pounds, and persevering in his original intention to decline all pecuniary compensation. In his journey to his paternal estate at Mount Vernon, he was saluted at every town and village with acclamations, fireworks, bonfires, and other testimonials of joy and congratulation, and received, from a grateful and admiring people, the well-merited homage of numerous affectionate addresses.

Contemplating the character and conduct of General Washington during this period of his public life; considering his services, his magnanimity, his firmness, and his heroic disinterestedness, it is not easy, either in ancient or modern history, to find a parallel. At the beginning of the discussions which agitated his country in general, and his province most particularly, he took a part from strong internal conviction alone. He had not the passion for distinction as an orator, or leader of a party, by which so many are impelled to violent exertion, without a due consideration of consequences; he never attempted to influence or to deceive: his aim always was to impart a rational and sensible view of the subject under consideration. It is observed of him by Mr. Jefferson, that he never heard him speak ten minutes at a time, nor to any but the main point which was to decide the question*. When he consented to take the command of an undisciplined and unprovided army, to sustain a hopeless cause, he gave up much and hazarded all, without the hope, or even the desire, to obtain any thing beyond the consciousness of having contributed to the happiness and deserved the gratitude of his country. He had acquired military reputation sufficient to distinguish him among those with whom he lived, and had retired to the enjoyment of affluence in a domestic life to which he was ardently attached, and the cultivation of an estate which he had the happiness to see daily improving

* Memoirs, vol. i. p. 50.

under his care. He had no debts in England to extinguish or delay by a revolution in America; but it was obvious that if the attempt to make one failed, his property would have been forfeited to the law, and he would have been deemed fortunate if he secured the safety of his person.

How he exercised command when he had accepted it, has been already related. To say that he displayed bravery in the field is very little; the attribute is common to so many, that the want, rather than the possession of it, excites observation: but Washington's military career was distinguished by courage of a different description; by that undisturbed firmness which could not be goaded into indiscretion, either by the efforts of his opponents or the reproaches or insinuations of his adherents. If, from the general praise due to his character, a single act were selected for the purpose of making a deduction, it would be his conduct in the case of Captain Asgill*, when he stood prepared to shed what he himself called "innocent blood," not under the impulse even of ferocious excitement, but with a mercantile precision, measuring the number of lives to be sacrificed by the scale laid down for the exchange of prisoners. This transaction may be extenuated, by considering the shameful conduct exercised by the loyalists toward Huddy, when a prisoner in their hands, and by the hatred so generally entertained against the loyalists amongst those whose feelings he must consult in order to retain their services. And it is important, in the elucidation of his character, to add, that, during the negotiation for peace, when Franklin made it a matter of exultation that England had given up the loyalists, and the confiscation of all their property was loudly called for, Washington alone stretched out a friendly hand for their protection†.

If disinterestedness can, with propriety, be termed heroic, that of Washington is peculiarly intitled to that denomination. It is not to be maintained that, by ac-

* Ante, vol. iii. p. 386.

† The expression of Sir Guy Carleton, in a dispatch to the Right Honourable Thomas Townshend, 15th March, 1783.—State Papers.

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cepting a due remuneration, or even the splendid donations which the gratitude of sovereigns or of senates may confer on those who have fought bravely, or served effectually, any person who has devoted his talents to the good of his country, either in civil or military employ, diminishes his claims to respect and honour; but the extraordinary self-denial of the American General, if it cannot be proposed as a model for others, is, in the highest degree, glorious to him. For his long, toilsome, and prosperous exertions, he would accept no pay, but performed them all at his own expense; to such a point of rigid exactness did he carry this principle, that when Mrs. Washington made him a visit at winter-quarters, he would not permit her travelling expenses, or her establishment, to be paid for from the treasury. At the end of the war, he received not, as other officers did, a portion of confiscated lands, or even an honorary donation of plate. His country shewed her proper feeling, by ordering statutes to be erected to his honour, and by conferring his name on the city which was to be the seat of government.

He refuses to
accept the
title of King.

During the uneasiness of the army, and their agitation on the subject of pay, a proposal was made to nominate him king; he sternly and indignantly repelled it. Much may be said of the resistance which would have been made to such an attempt, and the ridicule which would have been cast upon those who, professing republican principles, had only pulled down one King George to set up another; but it is to be considered that, in ancient and modern times, generals commanding devoted and discontented armies, under weak, needy, and disorganized governments, have effected the same, or even greater achievements. To his perseverance, prudence, and judgment, the triumph of the American cause was justly attributed, and his self-denial formed a noble and dignified specimen, rarely paralleled*.

Society of
Cincinnati.

At the moment of retiring from military service,

* The facts on which these observations are founded, are derived from the histories of the time, and from the various biographies, particularly those of Sparks and Marshall.

Washington experienced the jealousy of a republican government. His brothers in arms, now about to be separated into different states, or by great distances from each other, projected a society or order, to be called Cincinnati. It was to be composed of officers, of whatever rank or country, who had served by land or by sea in the late war, and their descendants. A fund for benevolent purposes was to be established, and they were to have an annual meeting. The ensign of the order was to be a golden eagle, suspended from the wearer's button-hole by a blue ribband, having on each side an inscription in Latin. The proposal was cordially received in America: General Washington readily consented to be their president; La Fayette, Lauzun, and other officers in Paris, gladly enrolled their names; the French King expressed his approbation, and an early day was fixed for the first meeting in Philadelphia. In any country, but a newly formed republic, this association would have been considered in no light more serious than those which freemasonry, literature, profession, or conviviality drew together in all parts of the civilized world. In America it was otherwise. The press speedily issued its bitterest anathemas. Separation from the general body of the people; an hereditary title; a disposable fund and frequent meetings, were displayed in the most terrific terms. Mr. Ædanus Burke, Chief Justice of South Carolina, first denounced them by a pamphlet, published under the name of Cassius, and having for its motto, "Blow ye the trumpet in Zion." Other writers speedily succeeded; the legislative assemblies of various provinces expressed disapprobation, and, although Congress had not yet recorded any opinion by a public vote, the adverse sentiments of numbers were well known. The General now, apprehending the inconveniences which beset this innocent measure, was disposed to recede; but, officers having arrived from France, declaring the satisfaction with which it was received there, he felt some difficulty on that side; but he was speedily relieved: the seeds of revolutionary equality had already taken root in France; the

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Debts and
embarrass-
ments of
America.

tract of Cassius was translated by the Comte de Mirabeau, and his friend Chamfort, and being published, with copious additions decrying hereditary nobility, the golden eagle and blue ribband were renounced in Paris, and in America the society assumed a shape perfectly unobtrusive, and insufficient to give alarm to the most susceptible feelings*.

Although the gross sum of their debt appeared trifling, yet the pecuniary embarrassments of the United States presented great difficulties, even in temporary arrangement, and threatened to prove a permanent bar to future prosperity. Their domestic debt was somewhat above thirty-four millions of dollars, or seven millions six hundred thousand pounds sterling. This admitted debt was in great part a reduced allowance or composition for two hundred millions of dollars in paper, which, following the advice of Franklin, had been issued, and in a course of progressive depreciation, until a thousand dollars in paper were deemed equivalent only to one in silver, and at last, notwithstanding all the efforts of government, no person would receive them at any rate†. To France America was indebted, for pecuniary aids, eighteen millions of livres‡, which it was agreed to liquidate by instalments, with interest at five per cent. in twelve years. A further sum of five millions of florins, or ten millions of livres§, for which the King of France stood jointly engaged with Congress to the States of Holland, was to be paid, with similar interest, in five years. Their remaining foreign debts amounted to about five hundred thousand pounds sterling. The limited authorities of Congress, and the discretionary powers of the several provinces, formed great impediments to the funding of this sum; to a scheme formed by the general legislature,

* For an ample account of these proceedings, see Jefferson's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 417; also, Sparks's Life of Washington, vol. i. p. 431; Marshall's Life of Washington; and the two pamphlets above mentioned; and for an account of that by Mirabeau and Chamfort, Memoirs of Dr Franklin, vol. i. p. 365; vol. ii. p. 69; and for the Doctor's own opinion on the subject, p. 46.

† An interesting statement of this matter is in Jefferson's Memoirs, vol. i. p. 401.

‡ 787,500 pounds sterling.

§ £437,500.

some acceded totally, and some partially ; while others withheld their consent from any measure which had a tendency to lodge the purse and the sword in the same hands, and resisted, by force of arms, the agents employed by Congress to collect the levies. In vain were exhortation and pathetic addresses issued, invoking the public justice, and appealing to the honour of the country ; the disregard of those motives, when incompatible with private interest, had been so long sanctioned, that such appeals met with little regard ; and the impotency of government and dishonesty of the people afforded serious apprehensions of general bankruptcy.

The eagerness of European powers to obtain a preference in the boasted commerce of America, added to these evils. An inundation of manufactures, tendered on easy terms of credit, tempted the merchants to adventure in purchases much exceeding their powers of payment. Debts were contracted by some to the full amount of their claims on the American government ; while the daily depression of public securities involved the demands of individuals in a general state of confused speculation. Those who were indebted to British merchants on contracts made before the war, were additionally distressed. By the terms of peace, all these debts were to be paid ; money was the only medium, since no hope could exist that a depreciated paper currency would be accepted by the merchant, whom a long and hazardous war had greatly injured by delay and risk. Thus the little specie brought by the French armies, or raised by loans in Europe, rapidly disappeared ; while the means of restoring it were suppressed by the new circumstances of America, in consequence of her separation from the mother-country. Commercial treaties were formed with Sweden, Prussia, and the Emperor of Morocco ; but the attempts to negotiate with Great Britain were for some time unsuccessful. The intercourse with the West India Islands, from which, as colonies, they derived large supplies of gold and silver, was of course prohibited by the colonial and navigation system of

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Great Britain; their fisheries were unproductive, through the want of the same favourable markets, and the discontinuance of British bounties; and their maritime weakness rendered unavailing their liberty of traffic in the Mediterranean, where they could no longer protect themselves against the Algerine corsairs. Thus surrounded by calamity, terror, and poverty, the people viewed with disgust the independence which they had been taught so highly to prize; they held a degraded and precarious rank among the powers of the universe, nor did they emerge from their disgraceful situation, till experience pointed out the necessity of a permanent and general government, sufficiently strong to coerce all the members of the commonwealth, and sufficiently respected to restrain the effusions of visionary theory. Then was Washington again called from his domestic retreat, to guide by his wisdom those councils which owed their authority to his valour*; and then the government of America assumed stability, and acquired respect†.

Powers of
Europe.

The powers of Europe, who had joined, without provocation, in an infamous conspiracy against Great Britain, even in their success had no cause for self-gratulation. They had brought the rival country to the necessity of accepting terms of peace which her own legislature had censured; but their triumph was not attended with correspondent advantages. If the hope of supplanting or rivalling Great Britain in the American trade animated their efforts, their expectations received a severe shock, even in the progress of the contest, when Mr. Laurens expended the money lent by France in the purchase of British manufactures, justifying his conduct, by pleading his duty to buy the best and cheapest commodities‡. This principle will always regulate the course of trade. A nation free to choose, not fettered by treaties, or restrained by the

* In 1789.

† Chiefly from Ramsay, vol. ii, chapters xxvi. and xxvii. I have also consulted Stedman, chapter xlvi. and the papers in the Annual Register and the Remembrancer.

‡ See Lord Sheffield's Observations on American Commerce; and also the Commerce of America with Europe, by Brissot and Claviere, p. 119, English translation.

desire of protecting internal or colonial commerce, will pursue the system by which individuals are guided, and deal with those who display the greatest integrity, and sell the best goods at the lowest prices, with the most advantageous terms of credit. If the expectation of reducing England to bankruptcy or despair influenced their conduct, they must have seen with astonishment and anguish the noble exertion of national justice in behalf of the loyalists, to whose claims was devoted a sum much larger than the whole debt which rendered America insolvent, and have beheld with surprise those public and private exertions which promised to efface the memory of a long contest, by providing ample funds for paying the interest of the increased debt, and by giving unprecedented extension and vigour to commerce.

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France entered into war without any sympathy with the Americans in their claims to liberty or senatorial representation, but purely in the hope of ruining England; and she met, in the immediate consequences, the just punishment of her perfidy. The ruined state of her finances rendered her the prey of speculists, and the scorn of Europe. Hardly was the definitive treaty executed, when, notwithstanding the efforts of government, the deliberations of capitalists, and an aid from Spain, the Paris bank, called the *Caisse d'Escompte*, was declared insolvent; and the people discovered that the absurd system of economy, and avoiding of taxes, on which the war had been conducted, was founded on delusion, and led only to ruin and disgrace. When the peace had subsisted nearly a year, the British ambassador at Paris stated the condition of the country, as one in which every thing persuaded him of the necessity by which it was bound to remain in peace: the very deep wounds it had received in the navy, commerce, and finances, could only be healed by delicate management and long repose. As a proof, he adverted to the state of Bordeaux, where a hundred and twenty-five bankruptcies had taken place; shipping had fallen fifty per cent. within a few months; not one American vessel had been seen in

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the harbour, nor had there been any demand for exportation to the West Indies. Marseilles and other ports in the south were in the same predicament, and a decline in trade and manufactures in the circumjacent towns had been the consequence. The Caisse d'Escompte had recovered a little; but its credit was without foundation, and supported only by acts of authority*. In a further political result, the French government suffered still more severely for having espoused the American revolution; speculations in finance, morality, and religion, tended to raise feverish anxiety, repress virtuous conduct, and propagate general infidelity; the cause of established government was daily suffering by the influence and example of those, who, having acted in the American revolution, and taking its events for their theme, made disgraceful comparisons, and, in the discussion of abstract theories, imparted to a numerous faction in France hopes of a radical change, and a new government, if not absolutely republican, yet on a republican model.

Spain.

Spain was disappointed in all the objects of the war, and her exchequer beggared by its progress. Before the conclusion of peace, her pecuniary destitution was extreme. Her specie, it was said, was buried in India, or squandered in America. A national bank was attempted; but, at its very commencement, its notes were at a discount of fifteen per cent. The arrival of some galleons from the Havannah, with nearly two millions of dollars, afforded a temporary supply, and enabled her to afford a small, though important, aid to France. Far from obtaining Jamaica, as an addition to her colonies, those which she possessed on the continent of America began to shew symptoms of being affected by the contagion of revolutionary principles. She remained in a state of inert listlessness, awaiting the reparation of her sufferings rather from time than exertion, reduced to the lowest ebb, without a political system of her own, but a veering weathercock, ready to be actuated by every gust from France.

August.

* Letter from the Duke of Dorset to the Earl of Carmarthen, 23rd July, 1784. State Papers.

Having admitted the ascendancy of the French party in her counsels, Holland began to experience the truth of a prophecy by Van Beuning, her old patriotic supporter against the force of Louis XIV, that whenever she should forego her connexion with England, she might date from that day the loss of her political importance. All her colonies, which had been taken by England, were recaptured by France, and formed a deposit in the hands of that crafty power, to insure placid obedience to such terms as advantage might dictate. At the conclusion of peace, she was the only nation which made an uncompensated surrender of territory; and, in its progress, she was displayed, without reserve, as the humble dependent on the will of those to whom she had voluntarily subjected herself. While she expressed displeasure at the conduct of her allies in signing treaties of peace without including or consulting her, it was under their dictation that the armistice between her and Great Britain was effected, and the disinclination to surrender Negapatam was in the same manner over-ruled. There were not wanting some discerning patriots who saw the benefits of a connexion with England. Messrs. Vander Perre and Boerse, the Dutch commissioners at Paris, acknowledged great obligations to this country for the manner in which they were treated in the preliminary articles; but, on their return to the Hague, their hopes of bringing their countrymen to a similar opinion was instantly frustrated. The violence of the prevailing faction, both against the Prince of Orange and England, was daily increasing. Believing what they wished, the Dutch were persuaded that our ruin was accomplished, and we no longer of any weight in the scale of Europe*. Adopting such opinions, swayed

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* Letter from Mr. Fox to the Duke of Manchester, 1st November, 1783; State Papers. In the prevailing spirit of malice toward Great Britain, an attempt was made on the officers of the Scotch brigade, who were threatened with the loss of the benefit of their commissions, unless they would by oath renounce their allegiance to their native country, and swear fealty to the United Provinces: they were no longer to receive the word of command in English, or to permit their band to play Scotch tunes. Major-General Ralph Dundas represented to Mr. Fox, Secretary of State, the repugnance of himself and his countrymen to being, as they aptly termed it, *Dutchified*, and taking oaths so repugnant to their feel-

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Conduct of the
Imperial
Courts.

by such motives, and governed by such influence, Holland was obliged to bear the ruin of her commerce and the plunder of her settlements, and to remain an indignant and helpless witness of her own degradation, in consequence of the augmenting importance of Ostend.

In granting numerous freedoms of that town and port, the Emperor sagaciously derived advantage from his neutrality; but his general conduct did not display a scheme of enlarged or magnanimous politics. He no longer followed the system of resisting the encroachments of great powers on the political balance of Europe; but, evading the difficulties of an unproductive contest, adopted, in combination with the Empress of Russia, the mean policy of attacking the weak, in hopes to augment his strength by their plunder. A joint attack on the Turks was meditated; and, in the eager pursuit of that object, a desire to avoid offence occasioned a tacit renunciation of the new naval code. The principles were mentioned by the mediators of the definitive treaty; but Mr. Fitzherbert, admonished by Sir James Harris, resisted the introduction of the system, and convinced M. De Breteuil that it was not less injurious to the interests of France than to those of England. The British ministry made a merit, in Parliament, of having, by this omission, prevented an unfavorable decision of so momentous a question; but M. De Vergennes, with still greater dexterity, assumed, in a dispatch to Russia, the credit of having established the principle contended for, by not having expressly renounced it.

Great Britain.

Perhaps the acquiescence of the Imperial Courts on this subject, originated in the hope of interesting Great Britain in their projected contest; but the ministry, resenting the evasive and selfish policy pursued

ings as natural-born subjects of the King. An answer was returned which entirely satisfied them, and was received with acclamations on the parade. It professed the King's high sense of their loyalty; pointed out means by which those who chose it might be admitted into the British service; those who quitted the Dutch would be received with every possible mark of consideration; those who remained would incur no displeasure.

In compliment to their royal ally, the Dutch negotiators attempted to mention him in the treaty as "King of France;" but, whatever term might be used in the courtesy of common intercourse, such an assumption could not be permitted in a public authentic act.

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by those powers during the war, refused to comply with their views, unless some more frank and decisive mode of conduct was adopted. Mr. Fox enjoined the British minister at Vienna to observe a cautious reserve, and evade inquisitive interrogatories. He was to employ his sagacity in discovering the true situation of affairs between France and Austria; and if there should appear a probability of dissolving that connexion, it would be the duty of English ministers to promote so desirable an object. "The line of conduct marked out for you," he observed, "is briefly this: every thing is to be said and done, that can contri-
bute to break the connexion between France and Austria. When that connexion shall be broken, every assistance will be given, short of actual war; till that connexion shall be broken—nothing*."

These prudent resolutions were no less becoming than necessary to Great Britain, after so expensive a war, in which she had been so unjustly attacked, and her interests so basely deserted by those powers who owed her the greatest obligations. The national debt was increased during the contest by nearly a hundred and sixteen millions of money; but the good faith of the nation, pursued without deviation, and shewn in every crisis, facilitated the discovery of resources for securing the interest, and finally annihilating the principal. The exigency required, however, to be met with firmness, wisdom, and temperance; as even the slightest agitation of the public mind on so delicate a topic would have been attended with fatal consequences.

One of the greatest and most permanent evil effects which resulted from the contest with America was the altered state of political discussion, introduced by an assumption of abstract principles, which made political leaders indifferent, or even adverse, to the success of their country. On former occasions, parties in opposition had decried the origin and reprobated the con-

* Letter from Fox, secretary of state, to Sir R. M. Keith.

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duct of wars; but never, until now, had public men claimed the title of patriots for having openly and heartily espoused the cause of an enemy in open hostility; rejoiced in his successes, palliated his defeats, and wept over those who fell fighting in his cause. In the beginning of the conflict, it might be alleged, that this sympathy was called forth in the cause of British subjects, maintaining, at the risk of every thing they possessed, principles which form the foundation of the British constitution. Such ground, at the best, is slippery and unstable; firm and good while debate and remonstrance may be supposed to govern, but ever dangerous when armed resistance is employed, and military conflict has commenced. They who rejoiced in the disasters of the King's troops at Lexington and Bunker's Hill, naturally and inevitably favoured with their best wishes and highest commendations the invaders of Canada, gloried in the success of those intrigues which worked upon the hatred of our natural enemies, and scarcely wished us a good deliverance, when, either in arms or by injurious compact, all Europe was united against us. The effect of such a principle of opposition could not be confined to the contest in which it was first displayed; its permanence and extension were to be expected in any future conflict.

For the acts which occasioned the American war, no defence in point of policy can be offered; but the temper and spirit which caused and perpetuated resistance, are as little to be justified while the parties maintained the relation of sovereign and subject. But, while it must be acknowledged that the success of the war in America would not have been attended with corresponding advantage to England, yet it is painful to recollect that the partiality to the American cause, which prompted the declamations in Parliament, seem to have extended to quarters where nothing should be considered but immediate duty. In perusing the history of the war, and looking at the political connexion of parties, it is impossible not to feel, that if Elliot had commanded at Long Island and Rodney off Ushant,

thousands of lives and millions of money would have been saved, and the national honour greatly advanced.

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Far from feeling the inclination ascribed to them by Dr. Franklin*, no government that could be established in England would have been inclined to speculate on any discord among the American people as the means of regaining the sovereignty. It had been authentically and formally surrendered, and no minister could have been found sufficiently daring to attempt a resumption. Had it been possible that the British government should have entertained such a desire, there was no want of encouragement and solicitation from the Americans. The discontents of the army, the tyranny of the local governments, the general resistance of taxation, the insecurity of property, want of many necessities which commerce alone could supply, regrets of the past and insecurity of the future, combined to render many who had been, even from the first, most solicitous for independence and separation, wavering in their opinions, and anxious to discover means of re-union with the parent state, provided that security could be afforded against all attempts at taxation. Proposals to this effect were made to Sir Guy Carleton, and, even after the signature of preliminaries, forwarded to ministers; but they never met with the least countenance or encouragement. To shew that these were not the inventions or exaggerations of disappointed loyalists or delusive speculators, many contemporary documents might be cited; but the state and feelings of the time were forcibly and accurately detailed by a republican author, not publishing in the heat of present impressions, but with the deliberation produced by the lapse of nearly forty years. "Never did peace," he says, "come more opportunely for the relief of a country, its army, and its commander. The army had become very unpopular; the people regarded them as little else than the last enemy to get

* Ante, p. 6.

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“ rid of: mutual discontents were exacerbated by mutual reproaches. Every article of the produce of agriculture now commanded a price, and the people were resolved no longer to suffer it to be taken from them without compensation. Opposition to the minions of Congress became popular; it was countenanced by men in power. It is not easy to conceive how it would have been possible for the southern commander, perhaps for the United States, to have maintained another campaign. The people were utterly worn out, and disgusted with the system of impressments and specific contributions; and the refusal, in some states, to contribute their quotas in cash, or permit the collection of a duty, must have produced (and finally did produce) a general resolution of the states to the same effect. The soldiers in the southern army, who were enlisted for the war, were now reduced to a handful; and such was the terror which the late ravages of the climate at Ashley-Hill had inspired, that no consideration on earth would have induced men to enlist again to serve in the low country of South Carolina. That state had been trying, in vain, for a year, to procure men at an enormous bounty, with very little success. North Carolina had relinquished the attempt altogether; and Virginia had literally been lying on her oars, until a flood of cash should flow in upon her from some quarter, God knows where. When money was furnished to her officers to recruit upon, it was found that the dreadful accounts propagated of the last campaigns, particularly the nakedness and privations of the soldiers, and the sickliness of the climate, had almost banished every hope of obtaining men. Happily for the people of the United States, Great Britain desisted from the contest exactly at that point of time when she ought most to have pressed it. She had gained the mastery of the ocean; Charleston lay exposed, without a piece of cannon to defend it; a few frigates could, at any time, have repossessed it; and three thousand men had only to move forwards

“to regain also the mastery in the three southern states*.”

In whatever form, or under whatever sanction, advantages might be tendered, the national honour, and the personal character of the sovereign, whose love of peace could be suspended only by the pursuit of honour and of justice, afforded a full security against their reception. When the King had reluctantly adopted the resolution which proved the means of ending the war, it became a part of his system; and the same upright firmness of mind which made him unwilling to receive terms of peace, attended with a dismemberment of his dominions, rendered him strenuous in adhering to them, when imposed by necessity and the voice of his people. His Majesty's views on this subject were clearly and nobly explained, when Mr. Adams, as envoy from the United States of America, obtained his first audience. The King declared, he anticipated the interview as the most critical moment of his life, but he received the new minister with gracious affability. “I was the last man in the kingdom, Sir,” he said, “to consent to the independence of America; but now it is granted, I shall be the last man in the world to sanction a violation of it.” This noble and dignified sentiment, joined with the general deportment of the King, formed such a refutation of the calumnies against him, by which revolt had been rendered popular, that Mr. Adams retired agitated and affected in the highest degree; he expressed, before he quitted the palace, his sense of the King's gracious demeanour, and always retained a strong attachment to his person and character†.

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Interview of
Mr. Adams
with the King.

* Johnson's Life of General Greene, published at Charleston, 1822, vol. ii. p. 391.

† From private information.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-FIFTH.

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State of the Ministry.—Retrospect.—Public opinion.—Rodney.—Messrs. Powell and Bembridge.—Opposition.—Mr. Pitt.—Notice in Parliament of transactions in India.—On Lord Pigot.—Petition on the India Judicature.—Secret Committee—and Select Committee.—Their reports.—Mr. Francis much consulted.—Proceedings against Sir Thomas Rumbold, Mr. Perring, and Sir Elijah Impey.—Mr. Dundas obtains leave to bring in an India Bill.—Debate.—Observations on it.—Meeting of Parliament.—The Prince of Wales takes his seat.—The King's speech.—Address in the Lords—in the Commons.—Observations of Sir Joseph Mawbey—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Fox.—Address carried unanimously.—Mr. Fox moves to bring in Bills for the government of India.—Mr. Pitt.—Motion for the second reading. Substance of the first Bill.—Petitions.—Second Bill.—Petition from the City—Counsel heard.—Debate on the motion to commit the Bill.—Debate on the Speaker leaving the chair. Celebrated Speech of Mr. Burke—Division—Committee.—Third Reading—Bill passes the lower House—Read in the Lords.—Earl Temple—Earl of Abingdon.—Petition—Counsel heard—Motion to commit the Bill—Bill rejected.—Observations.—Interference of the King—mentioned in the House of Lords—Motion in the House of Commons—Mr. Erskine's motion—the Ministers do not resign—they are dismissed.—New Ministry, headed by Earl Temple—his resignation.—Final formation of Ministry.—Conduct of opposition.—Motion to sit on Saturday—opposed by Mr. Fox.—Apprehension of a dissolution.—Committee on the state of the nation.—Mr. Erskine's motion—Mr. Bankes—Lord North—Address voted.—The King's answer.—Mr. Fox's observations.—Lord Beauchamp's motion.—Lord Surrey's motion.—Adjournment.

At this period, the state of the ministry was unusual, and beset with more than ordinary embarrassments. However combined in party views, they could not, to judge by their past political conduct, be supposed united in any common general principle of public action. The Rockingham administration had been formed on a cautious and jealous plan of mutual counterpoise: an equal number of the adherents of the Marquis and of Lord Shelburne was admitted into the cabinet, with Lord Thurlow as a neutral or middle party, agreeing rather in the views of Lord Shelburne than those of the apparent head of the administration, but not likely to be the close adherent of either. Lord Shelburne's assumption of pre-eminence was deeply and bitterly resented by all, but particularly by Mr. Burke, who had hoped to retain over the Duke of Portland the influence, amounting, it is said, to an absolute and unlimited ascendancy, which had been allowed by the Marquis. His vehemence on the occasion is said to have rendered the breach between Lord Shelburne and Mr. Fox irreparable; and although Mr. Fox's uncle, the Duke of Richmond, was proposed to the Rockingham party, as a substitute for their departed leader, even that was rejected, through the repugnance of Mr. Burke*.

To the public, the latent causes of the coalition were unknown; they saw men, who, in unmeasured terms, had been reprobated and held up to public detestation, united with those who had most vehemently reviled them; they saw their accession to office, influence, and power, the immediate result of this combination; and it was not easy to make them believe that the hope of these advantages was not the sole cause of it. These sentiments, which were very widely diffused and assiduously propagated, were not confined to the uninformed and distant observers of public events; they were shared by men of superior information, whose attachment to the parties was not to be impaired, although their judgment was seriously

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* Recollections, &c. by John Nicholls, vol. i. p. 296.

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shocked, by the event*. It was impossible that the violent denunciations of Mr. Fox, aimed at Lord North alike as a minister and a man, styling him the great criminal of the state, demanding his blood as an expiation of his misdeeds, pronouncing it unsafe to be with him alone, and infamous to act with him, could ever be forgotten. Nor was their effect mitigated by declarations that, with the American war, the cause of their disagreement had been removed†. A Latin adage could not, by those who reflected, be made applicable to any thing beyond individual dislikes and personal disputes: these, neither the benevolence of Lord North nor the warm generosity of Mr. Fox would permit to remain rankling in their bosoms, to the disquiet of their private lives, or the interruption of their public utility; but such fierce and solemn public denunciations could not be so easily atoned or cancelled. If Mr. Fox, resenting his dismissal from the treasury, or any other personal slight or injury, expressed himself with his characteristic heat and force against the mi-

* A fair specimen of this mode of thinking, in men so informed and so principled, is afforded by Dr. Watson, Bishop of Landaff. "From the moment," he says, "this coalition was formed between Lord North and the men who had for many years reprobated, in the strongest terms, his political principles, I lost all confidence in public men. I had, through life, been a strenuous supporter of the principles of the Revolution, and had attached myself, in some degree, to the party which professed to act upon them; but, in their coalescing with the Tories to turn out Lord Shelburne, they destroyed my opinion of their disinterestedness and integrity. I clearly saw that they sacrificed their public principles to private pique, and their honour to their ambition. The badness of the peace, and the supposed danger of trusting power in the hands of Lord Shelburne, were the reasons publicly given for the necessity of forming the coalition: personal dislike of him, and a desire to be in power themselves, were, in my judgment, the real ones. The Whig part of the coalition ministry," he proceeds, "forced themselves into the King's service. His majesty had shewn the greatest reluctance to treating with them. Their enemies said, and their adherents suspected, that if poverty had not pressed hard upon some of them, they would not, for the good of their country, have overlooked the indignities which had been shewn them by the Court; they would have declined accepting places, when they perfectly knew that their services were unacceptable to the King. They did, however, accept; and, on the day they kissed hands, I told Lord John Cavendish (who had reluctantly joined the coalition) that they had two things against them, the closet and the country; that the King hated them, and would take the first opportunity of turning them out; and that the coalition would make the country hate them."—*Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, Bishop of Landaff*, vol. i. p. 170-173. In these latter opinions, although perhaps rather too strongly expressed, the reverend Prelate was correct. The King declared, long afterward, that this was the only administration, during his whole reign, from which he had withheld his confidence. From private information.

† *Prior's Life of Burke*, vol. i. p. 415.

nister, a day might come in which placability and returning friendship might be becoming and amiable ; but when the dark brand of political wickedness was so strongly and so frequently impressed, no credit would easily be given to those excuses, which could apply only to personal forgiveness and reconciliation. In fact, Mr. Fox, who took to himself the benefit of this humane adage, had nothing to forgive : the enmity, which for so many years had characterized the debates, was of his own creating : Lord North had never denounced or vituperated him ; he had much to forgive, much to cast into oblivion, before he could become the friend of Mr. Fox ; he had nothing in the way of amnesty to ask ; from him and from the public Mr. Fox had to require every thing.

Such was the view taken of this important transaction by parties who examined it from remote and from proximate positions. Nor had the efforts of ministers hitherto tended to conciliate opinions more favorable, or to create in the public a strong predilection in their favour. Lord North could claim no popularity from the origin and conduct of the late war ; and Mr. Fox and the Rockingham party had no reason to expect the permanent attachment of the nation, from the tone and manner in which their opposition to it had been conducted.

In other respects their proceedings had not been satisfactory to the country. Their attacks on Rodney, from the moment his success appeared to revive the naval fame of Great Britain, drooping through previous negligence and misconduct, the time and manner in which they had superseded him, operated greatly to the disadvantage of ministers ; nor was their position much ameliorated by Mr. Burke's niggardly and frigid declaration, that, if there was a bald spot on the head of Rodney, he was willing to cover it with laurels.

In another transaction, connected with their own professions of economy, they were not less conspicuously unfortunate. Two gentlemen, named Powell and Bembridge, had been employed in the Pay-office during the administration of Lord Holland, up to 1765,

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1783.

Rodney.

Messrs.
Powell and
Bembridge.

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Jan. 14.

March 10.

April 24.

May 2.
19th.

and, on his lordship's decease, one of them, Mr. Powell, officiated as his executor. The noble lord had long been styled, in addresses to the throne, in public speeches, in pamphlets, and other forms of libel, the defaulter of unaccounted millions; and this calumnious phrase, unfounded, or grossly exaggerated, became popular and almost proverbial. On the formation of the Shelburne administration, the accounts rendered by his lordship, from December 1764 to June 1765, were investigated by a Committee of the Privy Council; Mr. Powell and Mr. Bembridge were examined before them, and, in consequence of the disclosures they were obliged to make, a case was submitted to the Attorney and Solicitor-general*, and, in pursuance of their opinion, criminal informations were filed†. Without loss of time, Colonel Barré dismissed them from the office; but Mr. Burke reinstated them. This proceeding, as might be expected, occasioned much animadversion in the House of Commons, where Lord Newenham moved for the production of the treasury minutes on the late investigation; but afterward, understanding that criminal proceedings had been instituted, he proposed to discharge his own order. Several debates took place, in the course of which the re-appointment of those gentlemen was, with his characteristic warmth, vindicated by Mr. Burke, and by Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and some other members, who deprecated as cruel, a demand of papers which would send the accused parties to their trials with a strong prejudice against them, while, as the office was at present regulated, their remaining in it could produce no evil, as balances were no longer permitted to remain in the hands of the paymaster, but were paid into the Bank. On the other hand, Mr. Pitt, Sir Cecil Wray, Mr. Dundas, and Mr. Kenyon, treated as futile the notion that the production of papers could produce any prejudice; and it was urged that, in restoring these two persons to offices from which they had been removed in consequence of such palpable misconduct,

* Mr. Kenyon and Mr. Pepper Arden.

† In Trinity Term, 1783.

and, after the opinion of the law officers of the crown, the present paymaster evinced but little regard for decency toward the public. Had they been acquitted, indeed, such a measure had been just and proper; but, for the present, at least, their suspension ought to have been continued.

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Mr. Burke expatiated on the indispensable usefulness of Messrs. Powell and Bembridge in their office, where, without their aid, the public accounts could not possibly be adjusted; considered them as unfortunate men, whom Providence had cast upon his protection; declared that their restoration was an act entirely his own; one in which he had not so much as consulted with any other minister; and spoke, in animated and pathetic terms, of the impression made on his feelings by the acute misery displayed by one of them, Mr. Powell, at an interview with him: the sight of his grey hairs and the expression of his anguish had so affected him, that he could not without difficulty attend his duty in Parliament; the poor man appeared nearly distracted, and he was almost afraid he would lose his senses. Lord Newenham's motion for discharging his order was carried, but the majority was not triumphant, or even flattering*.

Soon was the prediction concerning Mr. Powell verified; he violently terminated his own existence, and Mr. Burke, with Mr. Rigby and others, gave such evidence as satisfied the coroner's jury of his insanity. The information against Mr. Bembridge was tried in the Court of King's Bench, and, although defended by men of the most prominent ability at the bar, he was found guilty. A motion in arrest of judgment or for a new trial was decided to his disadvantage, and he was sentenced to pay a fine of £2,650, and to be imprisoned six months†.

May 26th.
27th.

July 18th.
Nov. 10 & 22.

These were among the subjects which engaged and exercised the public mind before the meeting of Parliament, in which an extraordinary and ever-memo-

Opposition.

* 161 to 137.

† Howell's State Trials, vol. xxii. p. 1, contains the trial; and much of the information to which my attention has been directed is very ably and judiciously collected in the explanatory pages.

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Mr. Pitt.

rable conflict was to take place. In the House of Commons, ministers counted among their ranks the known and powerful names of Lord North, Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Sheridan, with a copious list of able coadjutors. In the opposition were many individuals of known honour and respected ability; but their great leader, he from whom their motions were to receive their impulse, and their proceedings their character, was Mr. Pitt. Although, in early youth, he was looked up to with general expectation, esteemed by the King, honoured by the people, unblemished in character, unassailed by personal or political reproach, revered by his friends, respected by his adversaries, he seemed to stand alone in the conflict of parliamentary hostility; his hand wielded the sword, his arm sustained the shield, which were to assail and to protect in the approaching contest.

Notice in
Parliament of
transactions in
India.

1777.
May 21st.
On Lord
Pigot.

It was rightly foreseen that the affairs of India would engage early attention, and much anxiety was felt at the measures likely to be proposed. The discussions concerning transactions in that country were, for several years, confined to the India House. The treatment experienced by Lord Pigot first claimed the attention of Parliament, in consequence of a motion by Governor Johnstone, who, in a Committee of the whole House, proposed several resolutions, which, he said, would, if acceded to, be followed by a bill for better securing our settlements. The debate which ensued is remarkable only as it shewed the opinions of several eminent individuals, in office and in opposition. Mr. Benfield was unsparingly censured; Lord Pigot was crowned with applause; the reparation made to him by the vote of the Company was deemed unsatisfactory, and even nugatory. Much of the treatment experienced by his lordship, abroad and here, was attributed to the intrigues and the incroaching influence of the Nabob of Arcot; a suggestion which Lord North decried, as utterly void of foundation, the Nabob being a needy, miserable, ill-treated, dependent prince, without power, protection, or resources, and incapable of exercising influence, either by means of

terror or corruption. In answer to an observation that the session was too far advanced to allow of commencing an inquiry so serious and extensive, Mr. Fox desired the House to remember, that in May they had voted away the liberties of America; in May they had voted the Quebec establishment, so contrary to our own constitution. The chairman was directed to leave the chair, and the resolutions were lost*.

In the three following sessions, the affairs of the East India Company were introduced occasionally, for commercial, but not political regulation. At length, a petition arrived from the Supreme Council at Calcutta, and from agents in London, on behalf of the British subjects in Bengal, Bahar, Orissa, and their dependencies, complaining of the mode in which justice was administered; it was ably supported by General Smith, Mr. Boughton Rous, and Mr. Burke; it was referred to a committee, and, their report having been received, a bill was brought in, and finally passed, for altering, in some material particulars, the judicial administration. On considering the war in the Carnatic, Lord North obtained the appointment of a Committee of Secrecy to inquire into the causes, and into the present condition of the British possessions. In the following session, a select Committee was formed, on the motion of Mr. Dundas, for considering the administration of justice. The select Committee was principally composed of members adverse to Lord North: General Smith was chairman. In the secret Committee Mr. Dundas presided, and the members were all friends of the existing ministry.

The labours of these two bodies are preserved in a series of Reports, filling four large closely printed folio volumes, and the greatest praise is due to the Committees for industry and perseverance†. Their inquiry

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Petition on the
India Judica-
ture.

1781.

1st Feb.

12th Feb.

8th May.

July.

Secret Com-
mittee.

30th April.
Select Com-
mittee.

11th April.
1782.

Their reports.

* See the Debate in Hansard's Parliamentary History, vol. xix. p. 273.

† It is hardly necessary to say that these are the Reports so frequently quoted in preceding pages. The Reports of the Select Committee, besides those made on the 8th May, were eleven in number, the last being made on the 18th of November, 1783. The Committee of Secrecy presented six Reports; their last appearing on the 6th of March, 1782. Their labours were mentioned with approbation in the King's speech at the close of the session.

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1782.

Mr. Francis
much con-
sulted.

was facilitated by the production of the written narratives and observations in which all transactions, since the formation of the new government, were comprised. They had also the benefit of personal information, and particularly from Mr. Francis, who could direct their attention to the point desired with unerring exactness, and who could, besides, impart or refer to oral testimony on every subject.

From the communications of this gentleman, the reports of the committees received much of their colour; Mr. Burke describes him as the man whose deep reach of thought, large legislative conceptions, and grand plans of policy, make the most shining part of the reports, from whence the committee had all learned their lessons, if they had learned any good ones; he was the man, from whose materials those gentlemen, who had least acknowledged it, had spoken as from a brief. To estimate rightly these communications which are so profusely praised, it is necessary to consider the frame of mind and temper of the individual by whom they were imparted. Mr. Francis, when he considered himself in peril of speedy death, from his wound in the duel, is reported to have expressed his forgiveness of his antagonist*. He recovered, and with his health his former feelings seem to have returned; he left Calcutta in disgust, and his disappointment and almost anger against the Directors was disclosed in a letter, which he afterward declared to have been written in a moment of resentment, but which he avowed to have been composed with deliberation and under an expectation that he should be called upon to substantiate the contents†. On his passage, he wrote again from St. Helena, regretting the delays which would impede his return, but proffering information of the highest importance‡.

He announced his arrival in London to the Court of Directors, and, on the same day, called at the houses of the chairman and deputy chairman; but, in the

1781.
20th Oct.

* Dr. Tomline's Life of Mr. Pitt, vol. ii. p. 100, 4to.

† Second Report of the Select Committee; Reports, vol. v. p. 657.

‡ Same.

lapse of nearly a month, his applications produced only a formal acknowledgment from the secretary to the Company that his letter was received, and a visit from the chairman, occasioned by a written message left for him by Mr. Francis.

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1782.

13th Nov.

In consequence of this interview, he delivered at the India house a letter, addressed to the chairman, complaining of the neglect he had experienced, as deliberate and intended, and claiming, unless he had failed in executing the duties of his station, to receive the usual approbation of the court. The answer of the secretary produced a sharp and angry reply, which terminated the correspondence*. This conduct was calculated to hurt the feelings of Mr. Francis, and it is difficult to believe that it was not so intended: how it could affect his interests is not so apparent; but it is said that, "the doors of the India House being closed against him, he forfeited all expectation of credit, consequence, party, and following†:" It is, however, certain, that with a mind inflamed by the recollection of his long and unsuccessful struggles abroad, and his supposed unworthy treatment at home, he lent his aid to that committee which his exact local and chronological information enabled to instruct and to guide.

14th.

The Reports of the Select Committee having been referred to a committee of the whole house, Mr. Dundas moved a long series of criminatory resolutions, and obtained leave to bring in a bill of pains and penalties against Sir Thomas Rumbold and Mr. Perring, and for discovering their estate and effects, and those of Mr. Whitehill; it proceeded languidly through Parliament, members shewing a great disinclination to attend during its progress; and, at last, an injunction was voted prohibiting their departure from the kingdom while the inquiry was pending. In the following year, a new bill was brought in, and, when the session had nearly elapsed, a motion was made that the proceedings

1782.

April 15 and
May 2nd.
Proceedings
against Sir
Thomas Rum-
bold, Mr. Per-
ring, and Sir
Elijah Impey.

1783.

June 2nd.

* Second Report of Select Committee; Reports, vol. v. p. 394, and Appendix 6, p. 435.

† The very words of Mr. Burke's speech on Mr. Fox's East India Bill; Works, vol. iv. p. 101.

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1782.
3rd May.

Mr. Dundas
obtains leave
to bring in an
India Bill.

1783.
April 14th.

should not be discontinued by the prorogation or dissolution of Parliament. The inquiry, however, died away, and nothing effectual was accomplished. Motions were carried for the recall of Sir Elijah Impey, and also for that of Mr. Hastings and Mr. Hornby.

In their reports, the committees freely and largely censured the conduct of the Company; and Mr. Dundas obtained leave to bring in a bill for better regulating the government of India. The speech with which he pressed his motion is in many respects remarkable. The Governor-general was to be invested with amplified powers; he was, at his discretion, and on his responsibility, allowed to act even against the will and opinion of the council; a privilege which was not extended to governors in the inferior presidencies. The territorial system was to be totally changed, the Rajah of Tanjore and the Nabob of Arcot were to be objects of especial care. For Mr. Hastings, was to be substituted a person of high rank and birth, whose pledge for good conduct should be, not only his own personal honour, but also that of his ancestors; a person who could by his profession add to the character of governor, that of Commander-in-chief; uniting with integrity and high military reputation, skill, valour, and economy; a person who had no broken fortune to amend, no avarice to gratify, no beggarly mushroom kindred to provide for, no crew of hungry followers gaping to be gorged. The nobleman he alluded to was Lord Cornwallis. In concluding, the Lord Advocate spoke of the late peace with the Mahrattas, and treated their union with Hyder Ally as a monstrous coalition; and, unless ministers had a predilection for coalition-mongers, he trusted they would prefer a man of honour and honesty to supreme command, before a man who had joined or countenanced a government that had made so curious a display of skill in match-making.

Debate.

Governor Johnstone strenuously defended the character and conduct of Mr. Hastings. Mr. Burke, regretting that at any time he should be obliged to differ in opinion from the learned Lord-Advocate, declared himself sufficiently plebeian to think that the

high post of honour might as well be filled by a man of middling rank in life. Mr. Fox combated Mr. Dundas's arguments, and expressed astonishment that the junction between Lord North and himself should be compared to that of Hyder Ally and the Mahrattas.

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Perhaps it was owing to the advanced period of the session that no bill was brought in; but the debate displays the views already entertained. The attack on ministers was made by means of a popular watchword; the earnest commendation of Lord Cornwallis was probably an attempt to gain public favour and pave the way to power, by contrasting strongly the character and pretensions of that nobleman with those of Mr. Francis, who was supposed to enjoy the predilection of ministers, and to be the man of middle rank alluded to by Mr. Burke. That Mr. Hastings would be unsparingly attacked was quite obvious; indeed, the committees, in their reports, had shewn no forbearance toward him: they had not only censured the acts of his government with rigorous severity, but had, on some occasions, descended even to criticism, or sneer at phrases in his dispatches or narratives*.

Observations
on it.

The East India Company, too, could not but feel that their condition must be materially changed, even if their chartered character were permitted to be retained. They had not, however, omitted, during the war, to perform some acts which must give them popularity; particularly when the alarm of the nation, with respect to naval defence, was at the highest; they had raised six thousand seamen, and built and equipped, for the public service, three ships of seventy-four guns at their own cost†.

1779.

The meeting of Parliament was rendered memorable by the appearance of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who, having attained his majority‡,

Nov. 11th.
Meeting of
Parliament.
The Prince

* See, for example, the Eleventh Report of the Select Committee; Reports, vol. vi. p. 580 to 583; and the Reports in many other places.

† Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iii. p. 612.

‡ After this period, the number of his Majesty's children received no augmentation; therefore, beside those formerly mentioned (see chapter 15, vol. i. p. 336), the royal offspring at this period were Elizabeth, afterward Landgravine of Hesse Hombourg, born 22nd May, 1770; Ernest Augustus, now Duke of Cumber-

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of Wales takes
his seat.
King's speech.

presented himself in state in the House of Lords, to take the customary oaths, and to assume his seat as Duke of Cornwall.

The King, in his speech, announced the conclusion of definitive treaties of peace, and hoped that all the contracting powers would endeavour, with him, to keep the calamities of war at a great distance. "The situation of the East India Company," he said, "will require the utmost exertion of your wisdom to maintain and improve the valuable advantages derived from our Indian possessions, and to promote and secure the happiness of the native inhabitants." His Majesty also noticed the dangerous frauds and alarming outrages which had prevented the increase of the revenue; and, in conclusion, recommended moderation in debate.

Address in
the Lords.

In the upper House, the address was moved by the Earl of Scarborough, and seconded by Lord Hampden. There was no division, nor any regular opposition. Earl Temple alone made some animadversions on the state of public affairs, and particularly on the delay in completing the definitive treaty with Holland, but proposed no amendment.

In the Com-
mons, moved
by the Earl
of Upper
Ossory.

The Earl of Upper Ossory, in moving the address in the House of Commons, took occasion to speak of our possessions in India, which, he said, were now become the brightest and most valuable gem in the British diadem; and, consequently, ought to be objects of the greatest care. The acquisition of such dominions by a company of merchants was an event unparalleled, and the wisdom of Parliament should be exerted in securing conquests which would afford such resources to the country.

Seconded by
Sir Francis
Basset.

Sir Francis Basset, who seconded the motion, adverted also to our possessions in India; to the enterprizes of contraband traders, who, during the war, had

land and King of Hanover, born 5th June, 1771; Augustus Frederick, now Duke of Sussex, born 27th January, 1773; Adolphus Frederick, now Duke of Cambridge, born 24th February, 1774; the Princess Mary, born 15th April, 1776, and married to the Duke of Gloucester; the Princess Sophia, born 3rd November, 1777; and the Princess Amelia, born 7th August, 1783. There had also been two princes, named Octavius and Alfred, but they were dead.

conveyed intelligence to the enemy ; and, after noticing our calamities and expenses, rejoiced that at last we had got into the haven of peace ; “ *post tot naufragia portum.* ”

Sir Joseph Mawbey, availing himself of this quotation, said, if *portum* meant the coalition, he could not thank his Majesty on that account, for he detested the coalition. He expected no good from an administration, one part of which, during a government of twelve years, had occasioned all the danger, disgrace, and difficulty which were now felt and acknowledged.

In this mode of attack the honourable Baronet was not imitated by Mr. Pitt, who, in giving his hearty assent to the motion, said there was not one exceptionable expression either in the speech or the address. He must approve the treaties ; but it was singular that the House should now be called upon to express their thanks for signing them, although they were in substance the same with those preliminary articles for which, in the last session, thanks had been refused. England, he said, could never recover her situation among the nations of Europe, unless her ministers, by rigid economy, should make her revenue at least equal to her expenditure, or even create a redundancy, which would extinguish some part of the national debt, and so furnish means of carrying on with vigour any future contest. He recommended candid and authoritative statements on these heads, as the means of inducing the people cheerfully to bear new burthens necessary for the support of public credit. He regretted that a commercial treaty with America had not been accomplished, and declared that, if proper measures were proposed, he would not, by an ignoble opposition, endeavour to defeat, but would give them his best support.

Mr. Fox, heartily thanking Mr. Pitt for his last expressions, expressed his great satisfaction at finding that both the speech and address appeared unexceptionable. By the preliminary treaty, he observed, the faith of the nation was pledged ; so that the definitive treaty became matter, not of choice, but necessity. To the want of explicit declarations in the preliminary

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Observations
of Sir Joseph
Maubey.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Fox.

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treaty he imputed the disappointment of commercial arrangements with America; and the impediments in measures relating to India had arisen through the differences of opinion between the Directors and the Proprietors respecting the recall of Mr. Hastings. He also professed satisfaction at the language of Mr. Pitt, respecting economy and explicit statements to the public. To make a strong government, the dread of unpopularity must be surmounted; and the ministry who flinched from their duty on so narrow-minded a principle would not deserve support. He hoped that the spirit of dissension was, at length, to give way to the necessities of the state, and that personal animosities would be suspended, at least till the deliverance of the country was accomplished.

Address
carried
unanimously.

For the day, the wish of Mr. Fox was realized; the motion was carried without a dissentient voice; but this momentary calm was a prelude to one of the most stormy sessions and one of the most extraordinary conflicts recorded in history.

Mr. Fox moves
to bring in bills
for the govern-
ment of the
Indies.
12th, 14th, and
17th Nov.
18th.

In a week after this discussion, Mr. Fox moved for leave to bring in a bill for vesting the affairs of the East India Company in the hands of certain commissioners, and one for the better government of the territorial possessions in India. The statutes of the thirteenth and twentieth of the King's reign, and certain resolutions passed in the last session* having been read, the Right Honourable Secretary introduced his motion by a long and eloquent speech. The measure, he said, was not of choice, but of necessity; it was no idle speculation on his part, the business forced itself upon him and upon the nation; and, even if he would, he could not avoid or defer the discussion. The wretched financial condition of the Company, and the feebleness of their government, led to inconsistency at home, and, abroad, to disobedience and contempt of their commands. As a proof of their insolvency, he stated that they owed eleven million two hundred thousand pounds, while their stock in hand did not much exceed three millions; and, to shew that their

His plan.

* Namely, on the 29th of April, and 10th of May, 1782.

orders were not obeyed, he referred to many instances in the reports, particularly in the cases of Mr. Bristow and Mr. Fowke, the Rajah Cheyt Sing, and the Mahratta war.

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His plan was to establish a board of seven persons, invested with power to appoint and displace officers in India, and having control over the whole government of that country. Another body of eight persons, to be called assistants, were to have charge of the sales, out-fits, and other commercial concerns of the Company, subject to the control of the first seven. The Board was to be held in England, under the very eye of the Parliament, and their proceedings entered in books for the inspection of both Houses. For the present, Parliament should name all the members of this Board; but, after three or five years, or any time sufficient for experiment, the appointment should be in the Crown. The proprietors were not to nominate at first, but to fill up vacancies in the body of assistants.

His second bill would alter the tenure of lands, prohibit presents, abolish monopolies, and effect other important regulations. He had intended to introduce clauses for the administration of justice in India, and for the trial at home of criminals offending there, but had not been able satisfactorily to arrange a plan.

He begged that the bills might be discussed without reference to the merits or demerits of Mr. Hastings. He might be the most honest, upright, humane, and just of mankind, and yet the bills might be highly proper; or he might be the most corrupt speculator and most cruel and unjust governor that ever cursed the plains of Hindostan, and yet the remedy proposed might be found inadequate. He earnestly deprecated the intervention of influence. Should that manifest itself, future governors would expect it; in that House speculators would be defended, and the plunderers protected by those who shared in the spoil. The influence of the Crown had been deemed too great; but, in its most enormous and alarming state, it was nothing compared with the boundless patronage of the East India Government; if that were used to

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influence the House, the country was lost indeed, lost beyond all hope or possibility of recovery. In conclusion, he said he had not intruded himself into this business officiously ; it was not a mean and interested expedient to fortify a party, or add to the influence of the Crown. It was a strong measure, because the production of it required a great resolution ; but considering it, as he and his colleagues did, necessary to the salvation of the Company, and, with the Company, of the State, he had applied to it with the greatest earnestness, and brought it forward without the loss of a moment. He then moved for leave to bring in the bills he had described.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Fox having assured the House of Lord North's perfect accordance in the measures, Mr. Pitt adverted to a supposed imputation of indolence, of which, he said, Mr. Fox had never been accused, although it had formed a leading feature of that administration of which he had once been thought no great admirer. He seemed to desire a general amnesty for the coalition ; but it was much to be doubted that Parliament would grant it. He would not, at that time, offer any opposition to the propriety, necessity, or principles, of the bills, but suspend his judgment until they were presented. He complained, however, that such an extraordinary and alarming exertion of administrative power should have been brought forward with no reason to justify it but necessity, the plea of every illegal exertion, of every oppression, every usurpation, every infringement of human freedom ; the argument of tyrants, the creed of slaves. The necessity alleged was, that of destroying the corrupt influence of the Company in both Houses of Parliament ; but if government were to possess this source of influence and corruption, the minister would virtually be the Governor of India ; he would have all the power and patronage which this bill professed to eradicate. It was right to give stability and permanency to the property of the natives ; but, while endeavouring to secure to the Gentoo their natural rights, let the minister take care not to destroy the liberties of Englishmen. In his opinion,

the whole system was, on one side, absolute despotism ; on the other, gross corruption : he wished this bill not to pass without a call of the House.

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After some conversation, a call of the House was ordered.

In two days afterwards, the first bill was read, and a second reading moved for that day se'nnight.

Motion for the
second read-
ing.
20th.

Mr. Grenville objected to so early a day. In a business so momentous, the Christmas recess should intervene. The importance of the matter, the novelty of the system, its alarming tendency, the injustice it was fraught with, the aim being no less than to erect a despotic system which might crush the free constitution of England, afforded every reason for throwing it entirely out of the House. It made an attack on the most solemn charters, confirmed by the sacred faith of Parliament ; broke through all ties which should bind man to man, and was inimical to national honour and the integrity of English legislation. A great commercial body, respected by all the powers of Europe, was to be annihilated ; a portion of the public, who, under the faith of Parliament and a chartered constitution, had vested their money, were to see the nature of their property changed ; for what ? to increase the influence of the Crown in the House of Commons ! The same reasoning which was used respecting the East India Company's charter would equally apply to that of the Bank and to every other. Having urged the indecency, as well as impropriety, of hurrying on a measure so important, when Parliament had assembled at an unusually early period, and members had not yet returned from the country, he read and commented on some protests signed on a former discussion, respecting the affairs of the Company, by the Marquis of Rockingham and other peers*, complaining of haste and precipitancy ; and observed, that its obvious and undeniable effects would be to transfer the boundless patronage of India to the Crown ; or, rather, to vest it, for five years, in the person of the minister and his adher-

Speech of Mr.
Grenville.

* December 28th, 1772 ; June 10th, 1773 ; June 17th, 1773.

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ents, whether in or out of power. What was this but to lift a right honourable gentleman into a situation wholly unknown to our constitution? a situation from which he could not be driven or moved till he chose voluntarily to abdicate the dictatorship. He had indeed talked of a term of years at the expiration of which the commission was to cease; but he had too good an opinion of his talents, too high a sense of his spirit and daring ambition, to suppose that, having possessed himself of such inordinate power, he would ever consent to lay it down, and become an humble individual. To talk of Parliament nominating the commissioners, was to mock the understanding; they would to all purposes be the nominees of ministers; and their bold scheme for the increase of their own power by the increase of that of the Crown, was planned by the man whose voice had been loudest in the cry, that the influence of the Crown was excessive, big with danger, and ruinous to liberty.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox did not enter into a detailed vindication of his measure, but turned against his opponents several expressions used by themselves in former debates. On the reference to the protests, he said that as the honourable gentleman and his relation in the other House* were both able to speak for themselves, it would be quite as proper if they catered less for one another, and delivered, in their different situations, what better belonged to each respectively. He could see no good in deferring the consideration of the bill; it must be submitted to the other House; and, as they did not know how long their lordships might chuse to detain it, no time should be lost. He considered the desire of delay only as a subterfuge to defeat the purposes of the bill; and the motion for a call of the House was an effort of the same kind: the mover required it because he knew the members were not come.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt, after ironically exposing some of these arguments, avowed his sincere wish that a bill, so big with ruin to the nation, might be checked in its pro-

* Lord Temple.

gress. He had in vain endeavoured to define the reasons, or even the motives, that led to so new, so insolent, and so precipitate an attack on the rights and liberties of mankind. He could discover only one,—that, by introducing the bill early, and hurrying it through the House, the mover might obtain the noble end of settling the ministers in unbounded and absolute power. He would not take the sense of the House on the question, but leave the infamy of the intrigue on the head of its conductors.

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7783.

Mr. Arden enlivened the debate by a sarcastic allusion to the ministry and their intended commissioners. He regarded Lord North as a king, and Mr. Fox as an emperor, the emperor of the east! The seven commissioners also might be considered as seven emperors, seven holy Roman emperors, tributary and subordinate to the emperor of the east.

Mr. Arden.

Mr. Burke, comparing himself to a physician, who, having sat by the bed-side for several years, knew the patient's habits and constitution, the force and tendency of the disorder, and the fit recipe,—while opposition, perfectly ignorant of each, exclaimed against the violence of the medicine,—gave Mr. Wilberforce an opportunity of comparing the commissioners to seven physicians and eight apothecaries, come to put the patient to death *secundum artem*. The motion was carried without a division, and the bill ordered to be printed*.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Wilberforce.

When submitted to perusal, the bill caused an increased alarm. It recited that, by the disorders which prevailed in the management of our territorial possessions, revenues, and commerce, in the East Indies, the prosperity of the natives had been diminished, and our own valuable interests so materially impaired, that they would probably fall into utter ruin, if an immediate and fitting remedy were not provided; and proceeded to enact that the existing government, and all the powers and authorities of the Directors and Proprietors, or

Substance of
the bill.

* In this debate, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. John Scott, and Mr. Erskine, made their first, or maiden, speeches. Mr. Anstruther attained a high station, and the other two gentlemen the very highest honours in the profession of the law.

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2nd Debate,
24, p. 62.

of any special, general, or other court, in the ordering and managing the said possessions, revenues, and commerce, and all elections of Directors, should be discontinued. Commissioners, who of course were not named in the first draft of the bill, were to enter upon and possess themselves of all lands, tenements, houses, warehouses, and buildings, and to take into their possession all books, records, documents, charters, acts, instruments, letters, and other papers; and also all ships and vessels, goods, money, securities for money, and other effects belonging to the Company, in trust and for the benefit of the proprietors. They were empowered to remove, suspend, confirm, or restore, all persons from or to any office or station, civil or military, either in Great Britain or in India, whether appointed by act of Parliament or in any other manner.

24th.
Petitions.

25th.

Against this bill petitions were presented from the general Court of Proprietors, complaining of the attempt to seize and dispose of their property without any charge of delinquency; and from the Court of Directors, reiterating the same complaints, and requesting that, if there were any charge against them, it might be specifically preferred, and they heard in their defence. Mr. Fox took this opportunity of explaining that, when, on a former day, he said the Company owed eight millions, he did not mean that they were bankrupts for, or owed that sum beyond what they were able to pay. Mr. Pitt declared that he, and he believed many others, had so understood; and cautioned the House against receiving such insinuations, as he understood the Company were ready to prove that the right honourable gentleman had made gross and palpable omissions, in his statement of their affairs, to an enormous amount.

26th.
Second bill.

On the following day, Mr. Fox brought in his second bill, which corresponded exactly with the outline he had given, and enacted, in detail, the regulations proposed for the government of the Indian territory.

Previously to the second reading of the India bill, a

petition was presented from the Corporation of London, expressing their alarm at the powers intended to be given, and praying that the bill might not pass.

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Counsel heard.

Mr. Rous and Mr. Dallas were heard as counsel for the Proprietors, and Mr. Hardinge and Mr. Plumer for the Directors. The speeches of the first two, and the evidence they called, went to prove the solvency of the Company; Mr. Hardinge and Mr. Plumer applied themselves more to the general principle of the measure.

When the learned gentlemen had retired, Mr. Fox moved that the bill should be committed. He expected, he said, that violation of charters, despotism and oppression, would be the topics relied on, but was surprised to find himself attacked on the side where he felt most strong, the embarrassed state of the Company's affairs. He attempted, by a laborious investigation of their own accounts, to prove that they were insolvent; and referred even to the last Gazettes to shew that, in India, peace was not effectually restored, while the army had foregone all subordination, and the government had lost all proper authority. Could an effectual reform be made in the Company's affairs without touching their charter? He denied that the influence of the Crown would be increased, and inferred, from a letter written by Mr. Hastings himself, that, not war, or casual calamity, but a total want of efficient government caused the disasters which the bill was intended to remove.

Debate on the
motion to com-
mit the bill.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Pitt considered that the bill was pressed on with a violent and indecent precipitancy. The examination of accounts required some time. Mr. Fox had confessed several omissions in his former statement: omissions there were, omissions gross, palpable, and prodigious. The right honourable gentleman had undertaken to falsify the accounts rendered by the Company to the enormous amount of twelve millions, and had run through them with a volubility that rendered comprehension difficult, and detection almost impossible. Mr. Pitt then entered into a revision of the credit side of the Company's statement, and observed that

Mr. Pitt.

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Mr. Fox had blamed the temerity of the Company in producing their accounts in a state exceedingly fallacious; and had asked what indignation and censure was due to those who had dared thus to trifle with truth, decency, and the dignity of the House? What, then, should be said of a minister who ventured to rise in his place and impose on the House a statement every way absurd and erroneous? He moved an adjournment till the morrow only.

Debate.

In the debate which ensued, and which engaged the House till half-past four in the morning, the principle of the bill, the state of India and of the Company, the motives of those who promoted and opposed it, their political consistency, their hopes, fears, expectations, and designs, with many other topics, were brought into discussion. The required delay, although so very moderate, was strenuously resisted; Mr. Erskine, observing that it would be vain for the House to adjourn until those gentlemen had informed themselves who seemed to set all information at defiance, asked Mr. Pitt whether, if he were allowed to efface all the figures in the account, and substitute any others, he would, as a man of honour, say that any possible state of the Company's affairs which he could form out of figures would bring him round to vote for the bill. If not, it was a palpable, self-evident plan of procrastination, to desire time to know whether those observations on the accounts were true, which, whether true or false, he could not pretend to say would change any one of his ruling sentiments on the subject.

Mr. Erskine.

Division.

The division, the first which had occurred on the bill, gave the minister a majority of one hundred and nine*.

1st December.
Debate on the
Speaker leaving
the chair.

A discussion of equal length occurred on the question that the Speaker should leave the chair, and the House resolve itself into a committee.

Celebrated
speech of Mr.
Burke.

It was rendered memorable by one of those astonishing effusions of eloquence by which Mr. Burke has elevated the character of the British senate, and

adorned the pages of British literature. It is impossible by any extract to give an adequate idea of this composition*, in which deep research, accurate information, and enlarged general views and principles, are equally conspicuous†.

“I am concerned,” he said, “to perceive the spirit and temper in which the debate has been pursued on one side of the House. The declamation of the gentlemen who oppose the bill has been abundant and vehement; but they have been reserved, and even silent, about the fitness or unfitness of the plan to attain the direct object it has in view. By some gentlemen it is taken up (by way of exercise, I presume) as a point of law, on a question of private property and corporate franchise; by others it is regarded as the petty intrigue of a faction at court, and argued merely as it tends to set this man a little higher, or that a little lower in situation and power. All the void has been filled up with invectives against coalition, with allusions to the loss of America, with the activity and inactivity of ministers. The total silence of these gentlemen concerning the interest and well-being of the people of India, and concerning the interest which this nation has in the commerce and revenues of that country, is a strong indication of the value which they set upon these objects.”

The Charter under consideration could not, like Magna Charta, be denominated one of those rights which are to be held sacred, but merely as one to establish monopoly and create power.

“I admit,” he said, “to the East India Company their claim to exclude their fellow-subjects from the commerce of half the globe; I admit their claim to administer an annual territorial revenue of seven millions sterling; to command an army of sixty thousand men; and to dispose of the lives and fortunes of thirty

* See it at length, Burke's Works, 8vo, vol. iv. p. 3; Hansard's Debates, vol. xxiii. p. 1312.

† It is described by an author,—whose impartiality may be questioned, but whose ability to form a judgment cannot,—as a speech which could admit of no improvement, and required no amendment Dr. Parr: Preface to Bellendenus, Works, vol. iii. p. 157; Beloe's translation, p. 89.

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“ millions of their fellow creatures. But all political
 “ power which is set over men, and all privilege claimed
 “ or exercised in exclusion of them, being wholly arti-
 “ ficial and a derogation from the natural equality of
 “ mankind, ought to be exercised ultimately for their
 “ benefit. Such grants, for the mere private benefit of
 “ the holders, are, in the strictest sense, trusts; and it is
 “ of the very essence of every trust, to be rendered ac-
 “ countable, and even totally to cease when it substan-
 “ tially varies from the purposes for which alone it could
 “ have a lawful existence.” He then described accu-
 rately the extent and population of the British domi-
 nion, held either in the Company’s name, or in the name
 of princes absolutely dependant upon them, as extending
 from the mountains that separate India from Tartary to
 Cape Comorin, that is, twenty degrees of latitude. Ben-
 gal, Bahar, and Orissa, with Benares (now unfortunately
 in their immediate possession) form a territory consider-
 ably larger than France. Oude, with its dependant
 provinces, is not a great deal less than England. The
 Carnatic, with Tanjore and the Circars, is considerably
 larger than England; and the whole of the Company’s
 dominions, comprehending Bombay and Salsette,
 amounts to two hundred and eighty-one thousand four
 hundred and twelve square miles; a territory larger than
 any European dominion, Russia and Turkey excepted.
 The population he rated at thirty millions; more than
 four times the number of persons in the island of
 Great Britain. Our interventions in the tenure of
 lands, and in authorities, had been mere sales. In
 Bengal, Surajah Dowlah was sold to Mir Jaffier, Mir
 Jaffier to Mir Cossim, and Mir Cossim to Mir Jaffier
 again. The succession to Mir Jaffier was sold to his
 eldest son; another son of Mir Jaffier, Mobarech ul
 Dowlah was sold to his step-mother. The Mahratta
 empire was sold to Ragobah, and Ragobah was sold
 and delivered to the Peishwa of the Mahrattas. Both
 Ragobah and the Peishwa were offered to sale to the
 Rajah of Berar. Scindia, the chief of Malva, was
 offered to sale to the same Rajah, and the Subah of the
 Decan was sold to the great trader Mahomed Ali,

Nabob of Arcot. To him they also sold Hyder Ally and Mysore. They twice sold the kingdom of Tanjore. To the same Mahomed Ali they also sold at least twelve sovereign princes called polygars; but, to keep things even, the territory of Tinnevely, belonging to their Nabob, they would have sold to the Dutch; and to conclude the account of sales, their great customer, the Nabob of Arcot himself, and his lawful succession, had been sold to his second son Amir ul Omrah.

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He next adverted at great length to the breach of treaties and abuse of the right of war and peace, and was thus led to animadvert on the wealth acquired by these events, and the persons who gained it. "There is nothing," he said, "in the boys we send to India, worse than in the boys whom we are whipping at school, or that we see trailing a pike or bending over a desk at home. But as English youth in India drink the intoxicating draught of authority and dominion before their heads are able to bear it, and as they are full-grown in fortune long before they are ripe in principle, neither nature nor reason has an opportunity of exerting itself for remedy of the excesses of their premature power. Their prey is lodged in England, and the cries of India are given to seas and winds, to be blown about, in every breaking up of the monsoon, over a remote and unhearing ocean."

The impassioned orator afterward reviewed the whole government of Mr. Hastings in glowing terms of censure, asking whether, with this map of misrule before them, they could, on any principle of pretended public faith, consent to leave the management of those countries in the Company's hands. He censured, with much asperity, their acts with respect to Mr. Hastings, Colonel Monson, General Clavering, and particularly Mr. Francis; accused them of habitual treachery in the use of reward and punishment, and of contempt of public opinion, and disregard of the orders of the House. "Even since the beginning of this session," he said, "they have again made it a request to their favourite

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“ and your culprit, to keep his post, and thanked and applauded him, without calling for a paper to afford a light on the transaction, or taking a moment’s time to consider, or even to understand, the articles of the Mahratta peace. I therefore conclude,” he said, “ that this body, being totally perverted from the purposes of its institution, is utterly incorrigible, both in conduct and constitution; power ought to be taken out of their hands, on the same principles on which have been made all just changes and revolutions of government since the beginning of the world. It has been said, if you violate this charter, what security has the charter of the Bank, or of London? I answer, in the like case they have no security at all—no—no security at all. If the Bank should, by mismanagement, fall into a state similar to that of the East India Company, or if the City of London had the means and will of destroying an empire, and of cruelly oppressing and tyrannizing over millions of men as good as themselves, the charter of the City should prove no sanction to such tyranny and oppression.”

Having answered many objections to the bill, and shewn the good effects to be expected from it, Mr. Burke, in his happiest manner, pronounced, at considerable length, an eulogy on the character of Mr. Fox; and, in conclusion, said, “ I have spoken what I think, and what I feel, of the mover of this bill. An honourable friend of mine, speaking of his merits, was charged with having made a studied panegyric: I don’t know what his was; mine, I am sure, is a studied panegyric, the fruit of much meditation, the result of the observation of nearly twenty years. For my own part, I am happy that I have lived to see this day; I feel myself overpaid for the labours of eighteen years, when, at this late period, I am able to take my share, by one humble vote, in destroying a tyranny that exists to the disgrace of this nation, and the destruction of so large a part of the human species.

Division.

At the conclusion of the debate, which was extremely animated, and in which many members spoke,

although few new topics were introduced, the division was comparatively more favourable to the minister than before; it exceeded two to one*.

In the committee, the first operation was to appoint the commissioners, as they had originally been termed; but which denomination, on the motion of Mr. Fox, was changed to Directors. The first was the Earl Fitzwilliam, a nomination which, it was said, defied opposition; but no objection was offered to any person named†. It was proposed to give salaries to the Directors from the public money; but, as this would constitute a money-bill, Mr. Fox objected to it, because, on the slightest altercation by the Lords, the lower House must reject it; but he allowed, out of the funds of the Company, a salary of five hundred pounds to each assistant Director, which, he said, would, in comparison with the present expense, effect a saving of three thousand pounds a-year.

If the motion for a third reading produced little novelty in argument, there were yet some circumstances worthy of notice. Two new opponents appeared; Mr. Wilkes, who for the first time engaged in the discussion, termed the measure a swindling bill, made to obtain money under false pretences; and Mr. Flood, who, for the first time, entered the House, and whose maiden speech gave birth to some humorous observations by Mr. Courtenay. Some peculiar expressions in this and former debates deserve notice, either as characteristic in themselves, or as leading to subsequent attacks or pleasantries. The Attorney-general, Mr. Lee, urged the folly of talking of the sacredness of chartered rights, when so great an object depended upon their violation. What was a charter; a skin of parchment with a piece of wax dangling at

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3rd Dec.
Committee.

8th Dec.
Third reading.

* 217 to 103.

† The principal Directors were Earl Fitzwilliam, the Right Honourable Frederick Montague, Lord Lewisham, the Honourable George Augustus North, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Henry Fletcher, and Robert Gregory, Esquires. The assistant Directors were Thomas Cheap, George Canning, John Harrison, Richard Hall, John Mitchie, Stephen Lushington, John Smith, George Tatem, and Jacob Wilkinson, Esquires; from which list the names of Stephen Lushington and Jacob Wilkinson were, at their own desire, expunged, and those of Joseph Sparks and James Moffatt substituted.

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the end of it, compared to the happiness of thirty millions of subjects, and the preservation of a mighty empire? This phrase, separated from its accompaniments and circumstances, was, according to the custom of party, often cited to the disadvantage of the truly honest and worthy individual who uttered it. The coalition, in this, as in preceding debates, produced many vituperative and some pleasant remarks. Mr. Powys said that the bill, although introduced by Mr. Fox, was the old system of prerogative revived: it was in the true spirit of Lord North's administration; "its voice was the voice of Jacob, but its hands were the hands of Esau." Mr. Martin wished to see a starling perched on the right elbow of the Speaker's chair, which, whenever a pernicious measure, like that under consideration, was brought forward, should repeat incessantly to the treasury-bench, disgraceful, shameless coalition*. Mr. John Scott compared the new power to be created to the Beast in the Revelations, with seven heads and ten horns; but Mr. Sheridan, by another quotation from the same book, compared it to the seven Angels clothed all in white.

Bill passes the
lower House.

The division was again more than two to one in favour of ministers†.

9th Dec.
Read in the
Lords.

In full triumph, and attended by a great number of members of the lower House, Mr. Fox carried his bill up to the Lords, where it was read, and ordered to be read a second time and printed; but here all triumph ended: far different was its reception from that which it had obtained in the Commons.

Earl Temple.

Earl Temple seized the earliest moment solemnly to protest against so infamous a bill; it was a stretch of power truly alarming, and went near to seize upon the most inestimable part of the constitution, our chartered rights. It was the duty of the House not to be satisfied with the partial selection of papers now on the table; and he asked the Duke of Portland whether ministers would object to a motion for more papers.

* For a descriptive account of this debate, see Wraxall's *Memoirs* of his own Times, vol. ii. p. 430.

† 208 to 102.

The Duke answered that he thought the papers sufficient; but should it appear that others were necessary, they should be brought forward.

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Debate.

In this debate, the opponents of the bill were the Duke of Richmond, Earl Temple, and Lord Thurlow; its defenders, the Duke of Portland, Earl of Carlisle, Lord Viscount Townshend, and Lord Loughborough.

In language, fully as strong as that which had been used in the House of Commons, the bill was termed an atrocious violation of private property, an injury which cut every Englishman to the bone, a direct and daring attack upon the constitution, and a subversion of the first principles of government. To these observations were opposed assertions that it was impossible to regulate the Company's affairs without an infringement of their charter;—something must be done. In England, the Company owed above a million to government, and bills had been drawn from India to a great amount. Abroad, the Company's settlements exhibited appalling scenes of desolation and distress! a Prince driven from his palace, his treasures seized, and himself a fugitive; fertile provinces had been laid waste; wars unnecessarily waged, and even the peace with the Mahrattas led to a new war for the conquest and partition of Tippoo Saib's dominions. Invasions of charters were not without precedent. Even in the case of the East India Company, the proprietors of five hundred pounds in stock had been disfranchised, while large proprietors had acquired a double vote; but, in fact, their charter extended only to a monopoly of the trade, which was not to be taken from them, nor were they deprived of any other power, except that of committing such horrid ravages and massacres.

On the other side, the ruin of the Company was ascribed to the interference of Government. They had supported themselves with credit, enlarged their settlement, and raised their stock to three hundred per cent., when Government interfered and had brought them to the brink of ruin.

The present Bill, it was said, did not tend to in-

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crease the influence of the Crown, but to set up a power in the kingdom which might be used in opposition to the Crown, and to the destruction of liberty. The King would, in fact, take the diadem from his own head, and place it on that of Mr. Fox; and for the extent of power which would be acquired, reference was made to the Ninth Report of the Select Committee, which shewed "the East India Company in possession of a vast empire, with boundless patronage, civil, military, marine, commercial and financial, in every department of which fortunes had been made which could be acquired no where else; and all this was to be thrown into the hands of the minister of the present day."

In support of the demand for papers*, it was said that their lordships would never sanction the bill without full proof of actual necessity. They ought to require, and examine with attention, every kind of evidence, and not be confined to Reports from a Committee, to which Lord Thurlow said he would pay as much attention as he would to the adventures of Robinson Crusoe. A petition was presented from the East India Company, on which they were allowed to be heard by counsel; but to the reception of the bill itself no resistance was offered.

15th.
Speech of the
Earl of
Abingdon.

A petition from the City of London was also presented; but, before it was read, the Earl of Abingdon attacked the bill and its promoters with great asperity. The propositions it contained, he said, were ten times more violent, more daring, more enterprising, than that which had brought Charles the First to the block. Mr. Fox was not the minister of the people, but of a corrupt majority of the House of Commons. In another part of his speech he said, Charles James Fox could now attempt what those tyrants Charles Stuart and James Stuart could not perform.

He was, at this passage, called to order by the Earl of Derby, and his motion that the Judges should be summoned to give their opinions on four queries which he

* Some papers had already been presented to the House; see Lords' Journals, vol. xxxvii. pp. 9, 13, 15, 17.

proposed to submit to them, was unsupported, and negatived apparently without a division*.

Objections were made to the language of the petition; but the Duke of Richmond justified it by precedents, and, amongst others, a famous protest still on the journals†. Counsel then appeared in support of

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The Petition.

* Journals.

† The protest in question, and another on the same bill, have already been alluded to; and as the force of the arguments deduced from them is much increased by their having been signed, among other peers, by the Duke of Portland, the head of the administration, the late Marquis of Rockingham, and Earl Fitzwilliam, the inheritor of his estates, the successor to his political pre-eminence, and the first commissioner named in the bill, it may be fit to record a few extracts. The Lords protested, among other reasons:—Because a bill, evidently taking away, without consent or compensation, several rights and privileges enjoyed by a great corporate body, purchased for a valuable consideration, and confirmed by the most solemn sanctions of Parliamentary faith, can be justified only by such delinquency as incurs a forfeiture of those rights, or by such evident and urgent necessity as admits of no method, consistent with the charter of the Company, for the immediate preservation of those objects for which the Corporation was formed. Because, the House of Commons having appointed Committees to examine into the state and condition of the East India Company, and from them received several Reports previous to the bringing in this bill, a previous course of the same kind is equally necessary in this House; nor is it enough for Lords to be informed, from common conversation, that other men have done their duty, as a reason for neglecting ours. Because the bill was not only a high and dangerous violation of the yet unquestioned charters of the Company, but a total subversion of all the principles of the law and constitution. Because the election of executive officers in Parliament is plainly unconstitutional, and an example of the most pernicious kind, productive of intrigue and faction, and calculated for extending a corrupt influence in the Crown. It frees ministers from responsibility, whilst it leaves them all the effect of patronage. It defeats the wise design of the constitution, which placed the nomination of all officers either immediately or derivatively in the Crown, whilst it committed the check upon improper nominations to Parliament. But this bill, by confounding those powers which the constitution meant to keep separate, destroyed this control, along with every wise provision of the laws to prevent abuses, either in the nomination to, or exercise of, office. Because, the clause of this bill which deprives of all share in the management of their own property all proprietors not possessed of £1,000 capital stock, disfranchising, without the assignment of any delinquency or abuse, no less than twelve hundred and forty-six persons, legally qualified, is an heinous act of injustice, oppression, and absurdity, and a gross perversion of the high powers entrusted to the legislature. Because, the great principle upon which the bill has been supported will, not only in this but in all other cases, justify every infringement of the national faith, and render Parliamentary sanction the worst of all securities. We never can admit that a mere speculation of political improvement can justify Parliament in taking away rights which it has expressly covenanted to preserve, especially when it has received a valuable consideration for the franchises so stipulated. Nor are grants of Parliament, under these circumstances, to be considered as gratuitous donations, resumable merely at the pleasure of the giver, but matters of binding contract, forfeitable only on such delinquency or necessity as is implied in the nature of every other bargain. In this situation, the Protesters concluded, We feel the honour of the Peerage tarnished and its dignity degraded, if the provisions and precedent of this bill should render the public faith of Great Britain of no estimation, the franchises, rights, and properties of Englishmen precarious, and the Peerage distinguishable only by a more than common measure of indolence and servility: if the boundless fund of corruption furnished by this bill to the servants of the Crown should efface every idea of honour, public spirit, and independence from every rank of people. After

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the Company's petition; and the leader, Mr. Rous, was heard, with evidence, for the space, it is said, of seven hours; at the expiration of which an adjournment was prayed for, as some of the witnesses were not present. The division, the first which had occurred during the session, was ominous; the ministers were in a minority of eight*. On the following day the evidence closed, and the other counsel addressed the House†.

16th.
17th, motion to
commit the
Bill.

On the motion to commit the bill, a long debate took place; the topics of unconstitutional influence, violation of charters, bankruptcy of the Company, inefficiency of their government, and malversation of Mr. Hastings, were all discussed at great length, with undiminished zeal, but no novelty. The defenders of the measure complained, in a manner which shewed abated confidence, of the pains which, with too much success, had been taken to create prejudice against it; while several lords on the opposite side declared that, uninited and unsolicited, struck only with the faults which were exhibited by a perusal of the bill, they had felt it a duty to oppose its further progress. On a division, the bill was rejected by a majority of nineteen‡.

Bill rejected.
Observations.

Such was the fate of this extraordinary measure,

struggling vainly against these evils, we have nothing left but the satisfaction of recording our names to posterity, as those who resisted the whole of this iniquitous system; as men who had no share in betraying to blind prejudices or sordid interest every thing that has hitherto been held sacred in this country.—The passages in *Italics* are adopted verbatim, and form almost the whole matter of the City's petition. See *Debates*, vol. xxiv. p. 144.

* Contents 69, Proxies 18—87. Non-contents 57, Proxies 22—79.

† Mr. Hardinge alluded, in these terms, to the expression of the Attorney-general, already noticed, "As to the libel, for such it is, which intimates 'that a "Charter has been called a parchment with a seal dangling at the bottom of it," "what would I have given that it had been so called in the House of Commons; "because there, a high character of independence and political as well as personal "honour have seated the Whig Attorney-general of the day, who would have "crushed the levity of that flippant expression with all the weight of his eloquence and public spirit."

‡ The principal speakers for the commitment of the bill were the Duke of Manchester, Earls Carlisle, Fitzwilliam, Sandwich, and Derby, and Lord Radnor. Against it, the Duke of Richmond, Earls Gower, Coventry, and Radnor, Lords Walsingham, Camden, King, and Gage, and the Bishop of Salisbury. The numbers, on the division, were, contents, 57, proxies, 19, 76; non-contents, 75, proxies, 20, 95. It was observed that Lord Stormont, President of the Council, and Lord Mansfield, Speaker of the House of Lords, who had, on the 15th, voted against the adjournment, now voted against the commitment of the bill, although they took no part in either debate. It was generally understood that these two Lords had, from the first, declared themselves adverse to it. See *Tomline's Life of Pitt*, vol. i. p. 107.

and, prably, it occasioned no great surprise, although it occasioned much irritation and anger. Mr. Fox, when he introduced the bill, said, he was placing himself in a state of much responsibility, and incurring great risk. He described the proceedings of the opposition as a double game, in which they were endeavouring to injure him through two channels at the same time; through a certain great quarter, and through the people*; and Mr. Erskine concluded a panegyric on Mr. Fox in these words: "Let my right honourable friend go on with firmness, and risk his office at every step, and I will combat at his side, at the hazard of every prospect of ambition. Let him rely on his own manly, superior understanding, and the integrity of his heart, and I will stand for ever by him, or be ready to sink with him."

While the bill was pending, rumours were circulated that the King had expressed a strong repugnance to it, and had said to Earl Temple that he should consider those who supported it, not only not as his friends, but as his enemies; and that, upon his full authority, the Noble Earl might express this sentiment in terms still stronger, and more to the purpose, if he could supply them. Such was the shape which the rumour ultimately assumed; but, at first, it was vague, indirect, and complicated: it was mentioned to the House of Lords by the Duke of Portland, in the debate on the adjournment. The Duke of Richmond read, from a newspaper, an involved series of rumours supposed to be in circulation respecting the King's conduct to his ministers, and his communication with Earl Temple, all which the writer, adding his own reasons, pretended to contradict, from the best authority. Were these, his Grace asked, the reports which the Duke of Portland intended to investigate? He would inform his Grace, if he did not already know it, who was the author of them; it was some hireling fellow, equally undeserving of his Grace's patronage and their Lordships' notice. Earl Temple acknowledged that his

Interference of
the King.

15th, men-
tioned in the
House of
Lords.

* December 1st. Debates, vol. xxiii. p. 1427.

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Majesty had recently honoured him with a conference ; it was a matter which he neither wished to deny or conceal. It was his privilege, as an hereditary counsellor, to advise the Crown ; what particular advice he had given, he would not then disclose ; but it was unfriendly to the principle and object of the Bill. If these were the rumours to which the noble Duke alluded, he gloried in being the cause of them.

Motion in the
House of
Commons.

17th.

At the time of this discussion, the House of Commons had adjourned for two days, in consequence of a death in the Speaker's family ; but, immediately on its re-assembling, and, while the India Bill was undergoing its final investigation in the other House, Mr. Baker adverted to the report of a conversation between a great personage and a noble lord, which had for its object to create an influence adverse to the bill. An assertion that the King was an enemy to any particular measure under consideration, could only tend to prevent persons from voting according to their judgment, and to influence their votes solely by their hopes or fears. He, therefore, moved a declaration, that to report any opinion of his Majesty, on any proceeding depending in Parliament, with a view to influence the votes of the members, is a high crime and misdemeanor ; and for a Committee on the state of the nation.

Debate.

Earl Nugent, Mr. Pitt, and Lord Mahon, combated the first resolution, on the grounds that it tended to annihilate sovereignty, and to create discord between the two Houses ; that it had neither foundation nor object ; contained no specific charge ; was directed to no decisive issue ; and was founded on no positive facts, either proved or stated. It was below the dignity of Parliament to notice fugitive newspaper reports, and Mr. Pitt moved the order of the day.

Lord North and Mr. Grenville having each made a short speech, the former, with his usual candour, denying the existence of any secret influence while he was in office, Mr. Fox declared he never before felt so much anxiety, never addressed the House under such a pressure of impending mischief, never trembled so

much for public liberty. This rumour had been treated with unbecoming levity. It was not a mere newspaper report or verbal surmise, but something much stronger and more serious: a written record would be produced. This letter (and the right honourable member produced one from which he read the supposed communication above stated)—this letter is not to be put in the balance with the lie of the day. In terms of passionate declamation he deplored the condition of Parliament, robbed of its rights with a menace of immediate destruction before it. He spoke with bitter scorn of the majority by which the bill was likely to be lost; a majority of bed-chamber lords. A secret influence, he said, prevailed not only in this instance, but during the whole reign, and he pretty plainly indicated Mr. Jenkinson as its present agent. In conclusion, he contrasted his own public conduct with that of Mr. Pitt: "The people of England," he said, "have made me what I am. At their instance I have been called to a station in their service, and perhaps it would not be treating them well hastily to abandon the post to which they have generously raised me." The honourable gentleman, he said, was grasping at place on very different grounds. He was not called to it by, but in defiance of, a majority of that House, and stood forth the advocate of the secret influence, and a candidate for its benefits.

Mr. Jenkinson denied ever having given advice to his sovereign unbecoming his character and station. Mr. Grenville said, he had taken down the words cited in the debate, and shewn them to Earl Temple, who distinctly denied having used them. But Mr. Fox replied, that such a denial could be of no avail, unless the noble lord would declare what the precise words were. Would he venture to say, or would any man say for him, that he had not used words calculated to influence the minds of men by means of the royal name*?

* On the subject of this rumour and the debates on it, and on the ministry and affairs of the time in general, see *Recollections* by John Nicholl, Esq., vol. ii. p. 30.

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LV.

1783.

Mr. Erskine's
motion.

The House having divided, giving the minister nearly his usual majority of two to one*, Mr. Erskine moved that it was necessary and particularly incumbent on the House to pursue, with unremitting attention, the consideration of a suitable remedy for the abuses which had prevailed in the government of the British dominions in the East Indies, and that they would consider as an enemy to the country any person who should presume to advise his Majesty to prevent, or in any manner interrupt, the discharge of this important duty. Strangers being excluded, the debate has not been detailed; but it appears that, after Sir Henry Houghton had moved, as an amendment, the omission of the latter part of the resolution, the division was, in the customary degree, favourable to the ministers†.

The ministers
do not resign.

Under all the circumstances, it might have been expected that ministers would resign and make a merit of refusing to appear as the government, when their favorite measure had been rejected by the House of Lords, and the majority which rejected it was asserted by them to have been procured by an undue exertion of royal influence. They did not adopt this mode of conduct, and perhaps the minds of their leaders were distracted by the discordant opinions of others. Thus Mr. Fox, in one part of his speech, said, while all my best-meant and best-concerted plans are under the control of a villainous whisper, and the most valuable consequences, which I flattered myself must have resulted from my honest and indefatigable industry, are thus defeated by secret influence, it is impossible to continue in office any longer, either with honour to myself or advantage to the public. In another part, he seemed to consider it unworthy thus to relinquish office, and bow down under an ascendancy shamefully acquired. This critical moment, he said, was eagerly embraced to goad him from office, to upbraid him with the meanness of not taking the hint; but he arrogated no pomp from the formality of resignation. The present was one of those singular junctures when it be-

* 153 to 80.

† 147 to 73.

comes necessary to act with caution as well as spirit. Ministers stood pledged to the public and a very honourable majority of that House, not to relinquish the affairs of the state while in so much anarchy and distraction.

All doubt respecting the termination of this affair was speedily dispelled; for, on the night which followed the last debate, Lord North and Mr. Fox received messages from the King, requiring them to resign the seals of their offices, which were immediately transmitted to Buckingham House by the hands of the Under-Secretaries. They were, next day, given to Lord Temple, who immediately dispatched letters of dismissal to all the other ministers*. Mr. Pitt was appointed first Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of Exchequer; and on him devolved the arduous and invidious task of forming an administration, under circumstances so difficult, and amidst the distractions occasioned by so many political jealousies, anxieties, doubts, and fears.

In the very commencement of his undertaking, he encountered an additional and unexpected embarrassment; for Lord Temple, feeling, with great sensibility, the recent attacks, and concurring with his friends that he could, with more regard to his own dignity, meet and repel any charge which could be made on him in the character of a private individual, than if invested with the dignity or shielded by the supposed influence of office, resigned the seals in three days after he had accepted them.

To be deprived of the political assistance of a near relation†, and so firm a friend, affected Mr. Pitt very profoundly; but he proceeded in forming an administration, in which Lord Thurlow was Chancellor; Earl Gower, President of the Council‡; the Duke of Rutland, Lord Privy Seal; Lord Carmarthen and Lord

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18th.
They are
dismissed.

19th.
New ministry
headed by
Earl Temple.

22nd.
His resigna-
tion.

Final forma-
tion of
ministry.

* Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 172.

† His father was brother of Mr. Pitt's mother. See, on this whole matter, Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 171.

‡ Afterward Marquis of Stafford. This peer had never had the slightest intercourse with Mr. Pitt; but no one of his most intimate friends took a more decided part against the India bill; and when he understood the difficulty there

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Sydney, Secretaries of State; and Lord Howe, first Lord of the Admiralty. The Duke of Chandos was made Lord Steward of the Household; the Duke of Richmond, Master of the Ordnance; Mr. Grenville and Lord Mulgrave, Paymasters of the Forces; Mr. Dundas, Treasurer of the Navy; Sir George Young, Secretary at War; Mr. Kenyon, Attorney, and Mr. Arden, Solicitor-general.

Conduct of
opposition.

Before this administration could be completed, the attack on it was begun, in a manner which, while it shewed an absolute certainty of ultimate success, demonstrated also a determination not to be sparing in the display of contempt, and the use of means of annoyance. When a new writ was moved for Appleby, on Mr. Pitt's appointment to office, the late ministry burst out into peals of derision; and Mr. Fox informed the House that business was to be brought on of a nature too important to wait for the right honourable gentleman's return. Mr. Dundas and Mr. Baker immediately rose; the Speaker called on the former, declaring he first had met his eye; but the opposition, confident in their majority, would not allow the Speaker to regulate the debate; and, until he deprecated such a proceeding, were pressing a question for decision that Mr. Baker do now speak. The point was at last conceded*, and he very shortly moved that the House, at its rising, should adjourn until the following Monday. As the day on which they were speaking was Friday, the motion would have been a mere matter of course; but Mr. Dundas declared it had been his wish to request the House to sit on the morrow, that the land-tax appropriation bill might be read a third time, and transmitted to the Lords, in order to its being passed before the holidays, and that the payment of dividends on the fifth of January might not be impeded.

Motion to sit
on Saturday.

was in filling up the cabinet offices, he sent a message to Mr. Pitt, by a confidential friend, that, wishing to enjoy retirement for the remainder of his life, he could not be a candidate for a place; but, in the present situation of the King, and distressed state of the country, he would cheerfully take any office in which it might be thought he could be useful. His name and experience were certainly of great service to Mr. Pitt at the present moment. Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 174.

* Journals.

In the debate on this proposition, which was put into the shape of an amendment, much anger was exhibited, and a contumelious and threatening manner adopted. Mr. Fox declared his disposition to support the credit of the nation, and would by no means desire the House to adjourn till Monday, if that would prevent the passing of the bill before the fifth of January; but the delay could only be attended with one inconvenience,—merely this, that the Lords might possibly be kept two or three days longer from their country seats and their pleasures. Surely, at this moment, when the Parliament was brought, if report was to be credited, to nearly the eve of a dissolution, gentlemen would think it much better to subject the House to that inconvenience, than to leave their country, exposed to the dreadful calamity which that measure would draw down upon the nation. After an angry debate, in which Lord North was vehemently accused, and, with the genuine warmth of true friendship, ably vindicated by Mr. Adam, the amendment was rejected, and the original motion carried without a division*.

When the Commons re-assembled, Mr. Grenville apprized them of Lord Temple's retirement; and, after a few remarks, the House resolved itself into a committee on the state of the nation.

Mr. Erskine, having deprecated the dissolution of a Parliament which had devoted two years to the consideration of Indian affairs, and noticed the resignation of Lord Temple, and his unsatisfactory denial of the words imputed to him, moved an address, founded on the alarming reports of an intended dissolution, representing the inconveniences and dangers likely to follow from a prorogation, when the great objects recommended to their attention in his Majesty's speech, and particularly the consideration of Indian affairs, must be frustrated by delay, and by the assembling of a new Parlia-

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1783.
Opposed by
Mr. Fox.

Apprehension
of a dissolu-
tion.

22nd and 23rd.
Committee on
the state of the
nation.

Mr. Erskine's
motion.

* The fate of the bill, if it is thought worth inquiry, is told in few words. It was read a third time on Monday, and on the same day a first and second time in the upper House, and a third time on the day following; so that, in fact, no delay occurred. Journals.

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ment, not prepared by previous inquiry to enter with effect into those important investigations, and therefore praying that his Majesty would not hearken to the secret advice of particular persons, who might have private interests of their own, separate from his true interests and those of his people.

Mr. Bankes.

Mr. Bankes said he was authorized by Mr. Pitt to assure the committee that he had no intention to advise either a dissolution or a prorogation. In a long debate which followed, the principal feature was a speech from Lord North, who, with his usual wit and pleasantry, combined with knowledge and ornamented by taste, censured the new ministry, and vindicated his own. Adverting to a former night, he observed, it had been said that a starling ought to be placed in the House and taught to speak the words "coalition! coalition! cursed coalition!—Now for my part," he proceeded, "I think that, while there is in this House "an honourable gentleman, who never fails, let what "will be the subject of debate, to curse the coalition, "there will be no occasion for the starling, and while he "continues to speak by rote and without any formed "idea, I think what he says will make just as much "impression as if the starling himself were to utter his "words. As to the coalition and the abuse so often "thrown upon it, they always bring to my mind two "persons for whom I felt no inconsiderable concern; "they were shut up in the Eddystone light-house, to "mind the fire; they were of different principles, and "therefore, although they were shut in from all inter- "course with the rest of mankind, and although they "might by their conversation have amused one another, "yet they never exchanged a word for six weeks, and "each would have let the fire go out, and seen all the "navy of England dashed to pieces under them, rather "than give up the most trivial point to the other. Now "the enemies of the coalition would have had my right "honourable friend and me resemble these two men; "but we considered the safety of the public our principal care and duty, and, in order to save the ship of "state from running ashore, or dashing against the rocks,

Lord North.

"we agreed at all events that the fire in the light-house should not be extinguished, but that, let who would stir it, it was to be kept in. Thus what some affected to call a curse, was in reality a blessing to the nation."

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Address voted.

Mr. Erskine's motion was carried without a division; and all the necessary steps were immediately taken for framing an address and presenting it to the King.

An answer was returned without delay, in which his Majesty assured the House that he would not interrupt their meeting by any exercise of his prerogative, either of prorogation or dissolution.

24th.
The King's
answer.

Mr. Fox, treating this answer, according to its real import, as a mere assurance that the House should not be prevented from meeting again after the recess, wished for the shortest possible adjournment, and proposed the eighth of January. The state of the country would not admit of a long recess; for, as the present ministers could not stand long (and indeed to talk of the stability and permanency of their government would only be to laugh at and insult them), it would be necessary to move for another set of writs in the room of those who, in forming another ministry, should vacate their seats. He did not know that he should make one of the next administration; but he was impatient that the sense of the House might be soon taken on the weak young men who accepted offices under present circumstances. Their youth, indeed, was the only possible excuse for their rashness; as they did not seem to understand a pretty broad hint from the House, it would, perhaps, require a broader to convince them of the necessity of retiring, which might be conveyed in some pointed resolution after the holidays, and Parliament secured against a dissolution. The House finally adjourned to the twelfth of January; but not until Lord Beauchamp had moved that the Commissioners of the treasury ought not to permit the acceptance of bills from India, until the House should be satisfied that sufficient means could be provided for their payment out of the clear effects of the Company after discharging all sums due to the public.

Mr. Fox's
observations.

Lord Beau-
champ's mo-
tion.

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1783.

Lord Mulgrave having observed that, the Lords of the treasury being authorized by an act of Parliament to consent that the Directors should accept bills, it would be absurd to restrain them by a resolution of one branch of the legislature; Mr. Scott very candidly said that, if it was once admitted to be necessary, it was perfectly constitutional for that House to advise any executive branch of government, however legally established.

Lord Surrey's
motion.

Lord Surrey then moved for an address, praying that the King would not grant the office of Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for any other term than during pleasure, before the 20th of January.

Adjournment.

The Lords, on the same day, adjourned to the 20th of January.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SIXTH.

1784.

Difficult situation of ministers.—Strength of the opposition.—Decline of their popularity.—Increasing confidence in Mr. Pitt.—His conduct on the vacancy of a clerkship of the Pells.—Dissolution of Parliament expected.—Mr. Fox moves a committee on the state of the nation.—Speech of Mr. Pitt.—Debate.—Lord North's motions in the committee.—Mr. Fox.—Lord Surrey.—Debate.—King's message concerning Hessian Troops.—Observations.—Mr. Pitt moves to bring in his India Bill.—First Reading.—Bill rejected.—Discussions on supposed intention to dissolve Parliament.—Mr. Pitt personally appealed to—remains silent.—Violent debate.—Adjournment and termination of the debate.—Motion of Lord Charles Spencer.—Further proceedings.—Debate on a petition for reform.—Situation of public affairs.—State of public feeling.—Mr. Pitt's reasons for not dissolving Parliament.—London address.—Union of parties proposed.—Conduct of Lord North.—Meeting at the Saint Alban's Tavern.—Committee on the state of the nation.—Motion of Mr. Grosvenor.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Coke's motion.—Mr. Powys.—Mr. Pitt.—Resolutions carried up to the King.—Proceedings in the House of Lords.—Motion of Lord Effingham—opposed—supported.—Observations on Mr. Pitt.—Resolutions carried.—Proceedings in the House of Commons.—Effects of these proceedings.—Public meetings.—Middlesex.—Westminster.—Effect of these meetings.—Proceedings in Parliament respecting supplies.—Motion by Mr. Powys.—Address carried.—The King's answer.—Further proceedings.—Debate on the King's answer.—Mr. Fox moves a representation to the King.—Mr. Dundas.—Other speakers.—Motion carried by a majority of one only.—Other business.—Prorogation—and dissolution of Parliament.

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1784.

Difficult situ-
ation of
ministers.Strength of
opposition.Decline of
their popu-
larity.

WHEN the King, by exercising his just prerogative, had dissolved an administration, the principles and conduct of which he did not approve, their successors were placed in a situation of unwonted difficulty and peril. The opposition was strong in connexions and influence, and the members who composed their majorities would not easily be made to feel shame or despair, while they followed leaders possessed of such gigantic talents for every form and species of debate. Yet this powerful opposition was falling in public opinion, although the symptoms of its decline were not at first obviously manifest. The vigorous argumentation of Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, the dexterous dialectics of Mr. Sheridan, and the eloquent reasoning and playful wit of Lord North, could not influence the public to view the coalition without disgust; and the tendency of their late proceedings to invade the rights of the Crown, to vilify the other branch of the legislature, and to delay, if not altogether to impede, public business, because they were not allowed to guide it, produced, among many members who had been friendly to them, hesitation, caution, and even suspicion.

Increasing
confidence in
Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt had not, in the House of Commons, the aid of one cabinet minister. He relied principally on the experience and ability of Mr. Dundas and Mr. Jenkinson, and the youthful talent and attachment of Mr. Grenville. He was also assured of the unlimited confidence of the King, and a general opinion was entertained, not of his ability alone, but of his patriotism and integrity, which, at his early age (less than twenty-five years), nothing could impeach, but which passing events contributed to enhance. Fortune, just at this time, presented an opportunity of displaying his character.

11th January.
Conduct on
the vacant
Clerkship of
the Pells.

By the death of Sir Edward Walpole, a valuable sinecure, the Clerkship of the Pells, became vacant. Mr. Pitt, known to be unendowed with wealth, and to have sacrificed to the public service hopes of emolument and advancement in an honourable and lucrative profession, might, without reproach, have taken the office to himself, or secured or gratified some adherent

by the appointment. He did neither, but bestowed it on Colonel Barré, in exchange for his pension of three thousand pounds, which was thus gained to the public. This act was hailed with high applause by the aged statesman, it was strongly felt by the public, and frequently mentioned in Parliament, where Lord Thurlow, with his usual manly bluntness, declared that he had advised Mr. Pitt to retain the sinecure, as, in his situation, he would have done*.

Many of Mr. Pitt's friends urged him to dissolve the Parliament; a general expectation of such an event was prevalent, and most of the proceedings, after the expulsion of the late ministers, were caused, or at least characterized, by the apprehension.

On their re-assembling, Mr. Fox, to gain precedence for his own motions, began to address the chair at the unusual hour of half-past two o'clock, and before the newly-returned members could take the oaths. When Mr. Pitt had performed that ceremony, he attempted to be heard; but Mr. Fox insisted on precedence, as he was in possession of the House; and, although the minister announced a message from the King, he maintained his point, and moved to go into a committee on the state of the nation.

Mr. Pitt, for the first time since he came into office, delivered his sentiments. He was not anxious to prevent the committee, but complained of the art displayed by Mr. Fox; reproached the opposition with having been clamorous and petulant before the recess, and having proceeded to strange lengths, at a time when those who ought to have been present at the discussion of important questions were necessarily absent. He did not wish to prevent their saying any thing which would augment the clamour they had endeavoured to raise, that would support the petulance they had displayed, or the unjustifiable, violent, and unprecedented steps which they had taken for the purpose of inflaming the country, and exciting unfounded

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LVI.

1781.

Expected dissolution of Parliament.

12th.
Mr. Fox moves a committee on the state of the nation.

Mr. Pitt.

* Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 188.

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jealousies. He then stated his reasons why the committee should be delayed. The affairs of India, as was agreed by all, required attention: he meant speedily to bring in a bill on the subject, and hoped the House would vote with him against the order of the day.

Debate.

In a long desultory debate which ensued, two points most particularly engaged attention: the probable dissolution of Parliament, and the situation, conduct, and character of the minister.

Attack on the
minister.

On the first, while some members considered the King's answer a promise that no dissolution should take place until the important matters recommended to their attention had been duly provided for, others did not deem it a satisfactory assurance, and required declarations more explicit. The answer of Mr. Pitt solved no doubt; he merely said that it did not become him to comment on the words of his Sovereign's most gracious answer, neither would he presume to compromise or bargain away the royal prerogative.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Rigby.

Mr. Rigby assailed the King's answer as the mere trick of some one who had been in office but six hours. If any minister had issued such a fallacy with intent to deceive the House, he had grossly insulted them, and been guilty of an act of duplicity and meanness that would have disgraced the lowest pettifogger. A Newgate solicitor, he was persuaded, would have been ashamed of such a low, scandalous deception.

Mr. Pitt, it was said, could not hope to continue minister, while a House of Commons continued to subsist where the majority maintained the principles he had so recently reprobated. He truly called himself the minister of the Crown, for he certainly was not the minister of that House. The prerogative to dissolve Parliament was unquestionable; but prerogative could only receive efficacy from the support and confidence of Parliament. Without these, it would be a scare-crow prerogative, and the King would be nobody; aided by them, he would be somebody; the greatest prince in the world; and whoever should at-

tempt to make him great without the support of Parliament and his people, would only deceive his Majesty and disappoint themselves.

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1784.

Much was said on the subject of secret influence, or back-stair intrigues, to which the late change was ascribed; and Mr. Pitt's youth was the subject of severe animadversion. It was good, said Solomon, for a man to bear the yoke in his youth; and, if the right honourable gentleman had attended to that maxim, he would not, at so early a period, have declared against a subordinate, and usurped the highest situation.

The assertions respecting influence, Mr. Pitt repelled with indignation. He came up no back stairs, but went into the royal closet at the command of his Majesty. He knew of no secret influence; his own integrity would be his guardian against that danger; and whenever he discovered any, he would not stay a moment longer in office.

Answered.

Lord North repelled, with considerable warmth, some supposed charges of meanness and hypocrisy. Many bitter personalities occurred, but no great political principle was brought into discussion. On a division, the question for going into a committee was carried by a reduced majority of thirty-nine*.

Lord North.

Motion
carried.

In the committee, Mr. Fox, and others of his party, moved several resolutions, which were immediately reported and adopted by the House. First, that, if any person employed in the issuing of public money, should pay any sums, for services voted during the session, after Parliament should have been prorogued or dissolved, if that event should take place before the passing of an act for the appropriation of supplies, he would be guilty of a high crime and misdemeanor; and, secondly, that accounts of monies issued since the nineteenth of December, for certain services, and not appropriated, be laid before the House, and no monies issued until three days after such return should be made. It was represented that the latter resolution

Motions in the
committee.

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1784.

Lord Surrey's
motion.Amendment
proposed by
Mr. Dundas.Sir Watkin
Lewes.

Mr. Arden.

Mr. Fox.

Motion
carried.Lord Surrey's
other motions.

would occasion great obstruction of public business, and the opposition withdrew it.

Lord Surrey then moved, that, in the present situation of his Majesty's dominions, it is peculiarly necessary that there should be an administration which has the confidence of this House and the public. Mr. Dundas, observing that, accidentally or intentionally, the name of his Majesty had been omitted, and no mention made of the other House of Parliament, moved, as an amendment, that the motion should conclude with "the Crown, the Parliament, and the people."

Sir Watkin Lewes, one of the members for London, could not accede to a proposition which seemed to recommend persons, who, if they had the confidence of that House, had not the good opinion of the people; especially at a time when his constituents intended to vote an address of thanks to the Crown for having removed them. Mr. Arden said that perhaps the House might next resolve such address to be a high crime and misdemeanor in the Common Council. The motion was unnecessary, as every ministry ought to have the confidence of the House and the people.

The principal speakers of the opposition party were, Lord North, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, and Mr. Erskine; on the other side were, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Dundas, and Mr. Powys.

Mr. Fox still maintained that the present ministry had come into power on principles unconstitutional and odious to the majority of the representatives of the nation; but their supporters were determined not to see what stared them in the face. It was therefore necessary to make specific motions, and place facts in so broad a light, that even the most wilful and perverse affectation of disbelief should no longer avail them.

The amendment was negatived, and the original motion carried.

Lord Surrey next moved that the mutiny bill should be read a second time on the twenty-third of February; a measure which Mr. Pitt observed to be

needless, as the progress of the bill could, at any time, be delayed until the objects of the mover were attained; but, although this truth was admitted, the motion was carried that it might be formally entered on the Journals.

Lord Surrey also moved that the late changes in his Majesty's councils were immediately preceded by dangerous reports that his Majesty's sacred name had been unconstitutionally abused, to affect the deliberations of Parliament, and that the appointments made were accompanied by circumstances new and extraordinary, and such as did not conciliate or engage the confidence of the House. A debate of unusual warmth ensued, in which both sides vindicated their own principles and conduct, and impugned those of their opponents without moderation, but without any considerable novelty in argument or fact. An adjournment was moved, in which the ministry were in a minority of fifty-four*, and the Committee was ordered to sit again on the following Wednesday.

Mr. Pitt, having given notice that he should, on that day, move for leave to bring in his bill for the better government of India, was at last allowed† to deliver the message from his Majesty, which related only to the landing of the Hessian troops who had served in America, and who were necessarily lodged in barracks until the relaxation of the frost should render the Weser navigable.

Mr. Pitt delivers the King's message concerning the Hessian troops.

In these triumphant proceedings, the opposition might hope that they should be able to drive the ministers from their station; but the obstacles were solid and insurmountable. The vigour, tempered by caution and circumspection, displayed by Mr. Pitt; the increasing favour of the public toward him, which made a dissolution so alarming, and the honourable firmness of the King, afforded daily encouragement to one side, and fresh grounds of doubt, and finally of despair, to the other. By misunderstanding these

Observations.

* 196 to 142.

† It was the last business transacted, and the House did not rise till half-past seven in the morning.

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1784.

points, the opposition first injured and finally ruined their cause. The overbearing contumely with which they treated the minister was not favoured by the public; and the insult offered to the King, by not permitting a message from him to be delivered before other business, according to general usage, made a very unfavourable impression, while it could not be productive of any advantage. It will be proper to pursue this extraordinary contest, almost day by day, to its termination; as any attempt to arrange all the debates according to the subject on which they turned, would lead only to perplexity and confusion. In fact, the struggle for place was the only object really in view, whatever might be the matter under discussion.

14th.
Mr. Pitt
moves to
bring in his
India bill.

Although he might foresee the fate of his measure, by the numbers, temper, and tone of the opposition, Mr. Pitt moved for leave to bring in his bill for the better government and management of the affairs of the East India Company. He was aware, he said, what triumph he should afford to a certain description of men, when he informed them that the plan he proposed to submit to the House was founded chiefly on resolutions of the proprietors of India stock, and that his ideas in all the great points coincided with theirs. He anticipated the clamour which would take place on this discovery, and the vociferous acclamations of gentlemen ranged behind the right honourable member, whose signals they were always ready to obey, and whose mandates they were always ready to execute; but he was not to be intimidated from undertaking what he conceived to be for the interest of his country. He confessed himself so miserably irresolute, that he could not venture to introduce a bill founded on violence and disfranchisement. He acknowledged himself so weak as to pay respect to chartered rights; and that, in proposing a new system of government and regulation, he did not disdain to consult with those who, having the greatest stake in the matter to be new modelled, were likely to be best capable of giving advice. He then laid down the principles to be followed in his bill. In the first place, the political concerns of

this country in India, that is, the civil and military government, the political establishments, the collection of revenues, and, to give it one short and general definition, the imperial dominion, ought to be placed under other control than that of the Company of Merchants in Leadenhall Street; but the change ought to be made by the conviction of the Company, and not by violence. His next principle was, that the commerce of the Company should be left, as much as possible, to their own superintendence; and he would prevent effects injurious to the constitution of Britain from arising out of the government of India. Having detailed at large the provisions by which he intended to give operation to these principles, he concluded by submitting the measure to the consideration of the House.

Mr. Fox immediately expressed his opposition to the measure, treating it as the wisdom of an individual opposed to the collective wisdom of the Commons of England in Parliament assembled. He censured the measure, as partial and incomplete, an alleviation, instead of a remedy; just such crude and indigested matter as he had expected; a system founded on secret influence, and which must inevitably terminate in public ruin. Mr. Pitt's motion passed without a division.

On the first reading, the bill was much decried by Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; there was still no division; but, on the second reading, after a series of animated censures by Mr. Fox, Mr. Erskine, and other members, and an eloquent defence by Mr. Pitt, the motion for committing the bill was negatived by a majority of eight only*. It would be useless to recapitulate the arguments, or commemorate the personalities which occurred in debating a measure which failed so early and so entirely; or to detail personal charges of bribery, corruption, and indirect influence, none of which were adequately supported†.

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Mr. Fox.
opposed it.

16th.
First reading.

23rd.
Second reading.

Bill rejected.

* 222 to 214.

† See the Debates on the 12th and 14th of February.

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Discussions on
the dissolution
of Parliament.

14th.

23rd.

Mr. Pitt per-
sonally appeal-
ed to.Remains
silent.General Con-
way.

Mr. Pitt.

In almost all these debates, the probable dissolution of Parliament was the fear which constantly beset the opposition, and which they expressed in all possible forms. On the night when Mr. Pitt obtained leave to bring in his India bill, Mr. Fox, professing that he did not know what step the folly or frenzy of ministers might lead them to take, asked whether he should, at that late hour, move to go into a committee on the state of the nation; or whether he could be assured that Parliament would not be dissolved before the next day but one? Mr. Pitt said that, in his present state of imputed insanity, he hardly knew how to answer; but all his time in the interval mentioned would be employed in preparing his bill. After the division by which that bill was rejected, Mr. Fox obtained leave to bring in another; and, in moving to that effect, he asked if they were to be permitted to proceed with freedom and security in the bill, if they were to trust the promise made by the Crown, on the address of the House, or to be dissolved, because they had had the spirit and wisdom to maintain their opinion. Perhaps gentlemen might think it necessary to secure themselves against such an act of desperation and violence by an address to the throne. He did not think, however, that even the present ministers, mad, weak, or desperate, as they might be, would venture to go such a length. He called on Mr. Pitt to answer distinctly; but no answer was returned. In the course of the debate, several members called on the minister for an explicit declaration; but he still maintained the same silence, until General Conway observed that it was a new thing to see a minister sit in sulky silence, and refuse to satisfy the general desire of the House by an explanation of words, equivocal and calculated to deceive, which he had presumed to put into the mouth of his Sovereign. The ministry originated in, and maintained themselves by, darkness, secrecy, and artifice. They existed by corruption, and were now about to dissolve Parliament, after sending agents to bribe the electors. Mr. Pitt, with becoming indignation, called on the General to specify instances where

the agents of ministers had gone about the country practising bribery. If he could not prove, he ought not to have asserted such a fact. He had not been long accustomed to much violence and harsh language; but he could assure the House, that neither unsupported slander nor intemperate invective should decompose his mind. He concluded with the words which Scipio applied to Fabius, "*Si nullâ aliâ re, mo-destiâ certe, et temperando linguæ, adolescens senem vicero.**" General Conway replied, in terms rather vague and scurrilous, than satisfactory.

The debate became more and more violent; and many who had supported the minister expressed a determination to vote against him, if a motion were made on the present subject.

At length, Mr. Fox, at two o'clock in the morning, on Saturday, proposed an adjournment until noon, saying he did not wish to take advantage of the minister, who had so insulted the House, but would allow him that time to think of his situation.

When the House re-assembled, and, pursuant to a suggestion of Mr. Fox, in an unusually great number, the debate was found to produce nothing to answer the anxious expectation which had been excited. Mr. Powys, speaking in great agitation, almost in tears, asked whether they might expect to meet again on Monday? but he did not call for an answer that might proclaim the secrets of the Crown. Mr. Pitt said he had no intention to prevent the meeting; and the House adjourned.

Before these debates took place, Lord Charles Spencer, after recapitulating two of the resolutions adopted on the fourteenth, moved that the continuance of ministers in their posts was contrary to constitutional principles, and injurious to the interests of the King and his people. In the debate, ample justice was done to the characters of both the great leaders, and ideas were thrown out of a coalition between them. Mr. Fox declared that he neither courted nor avoided union

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Adjournment.

24th.
Termination.

16th.
Motion of
Lord Charles
Spencer.

Attempt at a
union of parties.

* Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 222.

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with any party, if established on a broad and consistent basis. He would join, to form a permanent union, on sound and general principles, with men of any description, if they enjoyed the confidence of the House and of the public. He denied that the ministry could possess the confidence of the King in their political, although eminently entitled to it in their personal, character; and he treated the address from the city, which had been carried up that day, as a mere falsehood, if it asserted that the late ministers had threatened, or did then threaten, to invade the prerogative. The motion was carried by a majority of twenty-one*.

Further proceedings.

Rumours of an intended union still circulated; but the acrimonious terms in which debates were conducted were not favourable to such an expectation. The charge that ministers had attained office by means of secret influence was frequently reiterated, and met with direct denial, with defiance to the proof, and with reflections equally personal†.

Debate on a petition for reform.

16th.

Another attempt to embarrass and discredit the minister was made, on presenting a petition from the freeholders of Yorkshire for a reform in the representation. It was brought up by Mr. Duncombe; Lord North declared his unchanged opposition to the measure; Mr. Powys intimated the possibility of a fourth estate in the realm; and Mr. Burke, deriding such a notion, inquired in what part of the heavenly system the new planet might be discovered? At present it was invisible; and he desired to know what might be its influence or the effect of its gravitation in the political planetary system‡. He made some facetious allusions to a late member of that House§, who, within a few days, had been translated, not transported, to a place of rest, which Lord Chesterfield called the hospital of incurables, or sometimes the hospital of invalides; and declared himself completely adverse to the object of the petition.

Mr. Burke.

* 205 to 184.

† See Debates on the 20th and 29th of February.

‡ Alluding probably to a planet recently discovered by Herschel, the astronomer, and, in compliment to the King, named *Georgium Sidus*.

§ Mr. Thomas Pitt, Lord Camelford.

Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, expressed his unchanged conviction of the necessity of a Parliamentary reform; the conduct of which he had been a witness for some weeks past in that House, and which he never should have seen had the reform which the people so much wished for been obtained, confirmed him in his former opinions. He would not, however, be the advocate of any but a temperate and moderate reform, temperately and moderately pursued; and he seconded the motion that the petition should lie on the table.

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Mr. Pitt.

This conduct, however fair and consistent, did not satisfy the Earl of Surrey, who expected more active support, and that Mr. Pitt would not consent to make part of a cabinet in which there was a man who was hostile to Parliamentary reform. To this indiscreet speech, Mr. Pitt answered, that if he had gone further, he might indeed have expected censure; as gentlemen on the other side might have seized the opportunity to allege that he had presumed, with defiled hands, to pollute the fair petition of the people; that he, the creature of secret influence, had dared to interfere in a measure which was to root influence out of that House. He was at a loss to conceive where they had learned that he never would make part of a cabinet, any one member of which should be hostile to a Parliamentary reform: perhaps it would be absolutely impossible ever to form such a cabinet; and Mr. Fox entirely agreed in this last proposition.

Lord Surrey.

Mr. Pitt.

In this tone and temper were debates conducted; thus was public business disregarded, and thus was the whole attention of Parliament engrossed by the single question, whether or not the ministers should retain their stations. The opposition, strong in their majority within the House, relied on it exultingly, although they were certain that the King and the Lords were adverse, and had many cogent reasons for believing that the sense of the people was not expressed by that majority. Of the King's feeling they avowedly had no doubt, although the extent of his repugnance to them and their measures was not then so fully disclosed. The House of Lords had clearly shewn their

Situation of
public affairs.

Of public
feeling.

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Mr. Pitt's reasons for not dissolving Parliament.

16th. London address.

State and views of the opposition.

judgment, and even the majority in the House of Commons was evidently diminishing. A dissolution was, therefore, to be expected; but Mr. Pitt prudently withheld his assent from the measure, until the opinion of the country should be still more clearly displayed. The address from the Corporation of London was forcibly expressed. It described the late India Bill as a measure equally tending to encroach on the authority of the Crown, to annihilate chartered rights, and to raise a new power unknown to this free government, and highly inimical to its safety. The city rejoiced in the dismissal of the late ministers, and promised their support to the constitutional exercise of the royal prerogative*.

That such an address from such a body would be followed by similar demonstrations from other parts of the kingdom could not be doubted; but yet the minister, considering the danger of precipitancy, chose rather to endure the taunts and indignities he daily received, than to endanger the safety of government and the repose of the nation by a measure, which, if hasty, must be imperfect, and, if abortive, ruinous. Mr. Fox, with all his characteristic intrepidity, was not insensible to the perils of his situation. He appreciated his majority in the lower, and the talents and influence of some of the most exalted and distinguished members of the upper House; but he and his party were beset with difficulties. In vain did they frame resolutions and addresses; no effect was produced by them: equally useless would it have been to pass any bill, either legislative or declaratory, as it would probably have been rejected by the Lords; even a second India Bill, which Mr. Fox had obtained leave to bring in, was never presented; to have stopped the supplies, or impeded the mutiny bill, would have excited a general terror and disgust, and would probably have alienated that majority on which alone they relied.

Mr. Fox himself had cautioned his party neither to risk a quarrel with the other House of Parliament,

* See the address, with the King's answer, *New Annual Register*, vol. v. p. 4.

nor incur the displeasure of the Crown, by going up with an address which would look like an indecency, where no indecency ought to be offered. He exhorted them to act with temperance and forbearance, to do nothing rashly, to avoid extremes, and to adhere steadily, but dispassionately, to their purpose.

On these circumstances, the idea of uniting the two parties in forming a ministry seems to have entered the mind of one member, and, having been expressed by him, was taken up by others, and frequently adverted to in debate.

Lord North seemed an obstacle to the union, and a call to the upper House was suggested as an expedient, by which he might be removed from ministerial life, without indignity. To this his lordship, with his usual openness and vivacity, replied, that, to use a plain English phrase, he had no inclination to be kicked up stairs. He should be very sorry to obstruct any arrangements that might be useful to the country; but he would stay in that House, to defend his character and honour when attacked. If, by the course of nature, he should be carried up to the House of Lords, he would go there as to a place of rest; or, as some would say, to him, as a place of sleep, where he would repose for the residue of his life.

Declarations of repugnance to a political union were not, perhaps, construed too literally; and some members, who thought such a measure would be attended with happy results, held a meeting at the St. Alban's Tavern, near Carlton House, for the purpose of ascertaining the feelings of the principal parties. They appointed a committee of four; and fifty-three signed an address to the Duke of Portland and Mr. Pitt. The minister expressed his readiness to co-operate in forming a stronger and more extended administration, if it could be done with principle and honour; while the Duke disclosed at once the point on which the failure of the negotiation was to be apprehended, when he said that the greatest difficulty consisted in Mr. Pitt's being a minister. It was attempted to arrange a meeting for the purpose of mutual expla-

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Union of parties proposed.

Conduct of Lord North.

Meetings at the St. Alban's Tavern.

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nation; but his Grace declined all such intercourse while Mr. Pitt remained in office notwithstanding the late resolution of the House of Commons. Without any reasonable hope of a fortunate issue, endeavours were continued for several days; middle terms were proposed, and the King was induced to recommend a personal interview; but, as each party adhered to his original declaration, it was found impracticable; and, although further meetings were voted, the attempt was in effect abandoned*.

4th Feb.

29th Jan.
Committee on
the state of the
nation.

Mr. Fox.

While this negotiation, if it may so be called, was pending, the day arrived when, according to its last adjournment, the House was to have resolved itself into a Committee on the state of the nation. Mr. Fox took that opportunity of expressing his own opinions and those of his friends. The House and the public, he said, still saw, to their sorrow, a ministry retaining their situations in direct opposition to their resolutions. He proposed an adjournment till Monday, when, if public affairs did not assume a more favourable aspect, it would be necessary to resume the committee. He trusted that the well-meant endeavours to produce a union might not again prove abortive; but, once for all, declared, that while ministers retained their situations, every effort would be unavailing. The motion was agreed to, after a debate, in which Mr. Pitt explained and vindicated his conduct; professing that no invectives should make him depart from the rule of discretion which his situation required.

2nd Feb.
Motion of Mr.
Grosvenor.

On the next meeting of the House, Mr. Grosvenor, the chairman of the meeting at the St. Alban's Tavern, moved, by direction of that body, that the present arduous and critical situation of public affairs required a firm, efficient, extended, and united administration, entitled to the confidence of the people, and calculated to terminate the divisions and distractions of the country.

Mr. Fox.

After some other members had delivered their sentiments, Mr. Fox expressed his ready adoption of the

* See Nicholls's Recollections, vol. ii. p. 113 to 117.

motion. The House, he said, did not desire the removal of ministers from personal motives or aversions, but because their retaining their situations, by means of an unconstitutional influence, was an impediment to the progress of national business. He was ready to make personal sacrifices, but could not relinquish principle or honour. The sense of the people could only be known and collected in that House. To say, that for such a purpose the people were not adequately represented, would reduce the House to absolute insignificance. Should the Crown gain an undue ascendancy, the people could not look for relief or find protection in the House of Lords; nor ought it to be supposed that the sense of the nation could be collected in assemblies of the people. By the sense of the House alone could the general voice of the people be legally known; and by that the constitution bound them strictly, firmly, literally, and uniformly to abide. This was the great obstacle to the union. The right honourable gentleman, for no reason he had deigned to give, would not resign; and could he expect the House to credit his bare assertions, in flat opposition to the most decisive circumstances?

Mr. Pitt said he intended to give a hearty assent to the motion: but it was rather a gloomy presage of union, that he could only concur with the members of opposition on grounds and for reasons the most opposite to theirs. He agreed that, in the present critical situation of affairs, a firm, efficient, extended, and united administration was absolutely necessary; but should any mode be proposed inconsistent with principle and with honour, he would most certainly oppose it. A resignation, before a treaty for union should take place, would be inconsistent with either; but still, so little was he attached to office, that if he could see a prospect of a strong and well-connected government ready to succeed him, he would cheerfully retire, without desiring to form a part of such government: how paltry would it then be in him to resign, for the sole purpose of treating about returning back to office!

Mr. Pitt.

No division having taken place on this motion,

Mr. Coke's
motion.

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Mr. Powys.

Mr. Coke proposed a resolution, declaring the continuance of the present ministers an obstacle to the formation of such an administration as might enjoy the confidence of the House, and put an end to the divisions and distractions of the country.

In the debate, Mr. Powys took a new and extraordinary line. He disapproved and had voted against the resolutions of the 16th of January; they were hastily proposed, grounded on doubtful and unauthenticated premises, and held out unfair conclusions; but still they were upon the Journals, and they who had obtained, might triumph in them, as Shylock does in his bond. He censured Mr. Pitt for his weakness in not dissolving Parliament; but, highly as he disapproved the resolutions, they ought to be rescinded, or the minister should resign. The right honourable gentleman could not be expected to agree to surrender the keys of the fortress to the besiegers, and to march out with a halter about his neck. If he would move the previous question, with a view to have the resolutions reconsidered, he would vote with him; if not, thinking, as he did, that those resolutions and the present administration ought not to exist together, he could not negative the present motion.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt did not adopt this course. The House, he said, had been led on insidiously from one resolution to another, without a fair discussion of any one on its own proper merits. The first had passed at the unusual hour of six in the morning, and with little or no debate. The second, in a manner, grew out of the first; and they were immediately followed by the third. The present motion was not likely to further the purpose of that which had been voted; but it would form an effectual bar to the desired union. Mr. Powys had talked about a fortress from which he was to walk out with a halter about his neck: the only fortress he ever desired to have a share in defending, was that of the constitution; and he would resist every attack and every attempt to seduce him out of it. Was he to cast off his armour and meanly beg to be readmitted, and considered as a volunteer in the army

of the enemy? If that House insisted upon the dismissal of ministers, two constitutional means were open to them—impeachment for their crimes, if ministers had committed any; or an address to the Crown, where alone resided the power of removing ministers.

On a division, the motion was carried by a majority of nineteen*; and, on the following day, Mr. Coke, observing with regret that the ministry had not resigned, proposed that the two resolutions should be laid before his Majesty, by such members as were of the privy council; which, after an angry debate, was also carried, the majority being twenty-four†.

At this period, the Lords began to shew their repugnance to the proceedings of the lower House. The Earl of Effingham spoke of them in terms of animated censure. The prerogative of the Crown in the appointment of ministers, he said, was attacked, and a kind of new power set up. Should that House suffer such measures to pass without animadversion, it would betray an unpardonable indifference to the constitution, and perhaps endanger its existence. Having read the Act of 1781 for establishing an agreement with the East India Company, and a resolution of the House of Lords in 1704, that it is unconstitutional and contrary to law for any one branch of the legislature to assume to itself a right of making any resolutions which should impede or put a stop to the executive power of government; and the late resolutions of the lower House‡, restraining the Lords of the treasury from sanctioning the acceptance of bills drawn from India, and against the continuance in office of the present ministry; and described these proceedings as highly alarming, and an infringement of the constitution; he moved resolutions, declaring the incompetency of one branch of the legislature to assume the direction of a discretionary power vested by law in any body of men, or disputing the undoubted authority of the Crown in appointing to the great offices of executive government. Should these be adopted, he would move for a corresponding address to the throne.

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Resolutions
carried up to
the King.
3rd.

4th.
Proceedings in
the House of
Lords.
Motion of Lord
Effingham.

* 223 to 204. † 211 to 187. ‡ 24th Dec. 1783, and 16th Jan. 1784.

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Opposed.

Earl Fitzwilliam, the Duke of Manchester, and Lord Loughborough, were the opponents of these propositions. They saw, in the first resolution of the other House, nothing alarming, nothing violent, nothing that ought to excite jealousy or provoke interference. It was merely a piece of salutary advice, timely given, to the Lords of the treasury, on a subject to which it well became the House of Commons to attend. A discretion was vested in the Lords of the treasury, and the House of Commons, far from interfering improperly, assuming a power to suspend acts of Parliament, or arrogating and seizing upon the discretion so vested, had done only that which was necessary, prudent, and wise. The proposed resolutions were calculated to create a variance between the two Houses. The privileges of the Commons were defined by the constitution. To them it belonged to decide on the characters of ministers, and on the confidence due to them.

Supported.

Earl Fauconberg, the Duke of Richmond, the Lord Chancellor, and Lord Sydney, supported the resolutions. Those of the lower House were of a very intemperate nature, more adapted to excite feuds and animosities, than to conciliate jarring interests and unhappy differences. The conduct which had been pursued was unprecedented, and the proceedings originated in a manner which no one could explain, which had no proof, and which was only circulated at random. What would be the consequence if they were suffered to go on, it was impossible to say; the extremities to which they had proceeded could not be viewed without anxiety, and shewed the necessity for interference. Their first resolution neither was, nor affected to be, a hint or piece of advice to the Lords of the treasury, but an explicit claim to direct the exercise of a vested discretionary power. In a political or commercial point of view, the resolution was ignorantly and stupidly drawn, and the late proceedings were wild efforts of childish ambition.

Observations
on Mr. Pitt.

In the course of the debate, the character and conduct of Mr. Pitt, and particularly his disinterestedness

in the late transactions respecting the clerkship of the pells, were highly extolled. Lord Thurlow said he had been shabby enough to advise him to take that which had so fairly fallen into his hands, and he believed he should have been shabby enough to do so himself, as other great and exalted characters had so recently set him the example. But Mr. Pitt, entertaining notions of purity very uncommon in these degenerate days, and rivalling the purest times of Greece and Rome, had nobly preferred the public, to the consideration of his own private, interest.

Earl Fitzwilliam, while he admitted the laudable disinterestedness of Mr. Pitt, contended that all the good qualities which intitled him to applause as an individual, were insufficient to govern Parliament in their judgment of his fitness as a great officer of state. The Earl of Mansfield and Viscount Stormont wished the resolutions withdrawn, as inexpedient and dangerous; but the House, on a division, carried them by a majority of forty-seven*.

To the address which was prepared in pursuance of this decision, his Majesty immediately returned a most gracious answer.

Lord Beauchamp, whose measure was thus censured, lost no time in urging the Commons to support it by precedents. He moved for a committee to search the journals of the Lords; and, on their report, obtained one to inspect those of the Commons. The debates on these occasions were distinguished by much asperity, but create no interest; and the reports furnish only a series of isolated facts, on which no proposition of general import could be founded, and from which no political axiom could be derived. Lord Beauchamp moved six resolutions, which were carried, after one division, in which the majority was twenty-nine†.

This extraordinary contest had now proceeded to such an extent, that the several branches of the legislature were completely divided. The Lords had more

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Resolutions
carried.

5th.
Address.

Proceedings in
the House of
Commons.
5th.

6th.

9th.

12th.

16th.

Effect of the
proceedings.

* Contents, 100; non-contents, 53, proxies included.

† 186 to 157.

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than indirectly censured the resolutions of the lower House, and the King had indicated, by his ready answer to the address of the upper House, and his tardiness in acknowledging those of the lower House, as well as by his retention of his ministers, that his opinions were firm and unaltered. The opposition maintained a majority in the House of Commons, although its numbers were evidently diminishing. It was, therefore, obvious that, in this state of things, the voice of the people, expressed in county and town meetings, must be of preponderating effect in deciding the question, whether a majority in the House of Commons could assume the right of dictating to the throne, in a matter of the highest prerogative, the election or dismissal of ministers, in opposition to the known sentiment of the Lords, and upon the strict construction of that indisputable legal principle, that the sense of the people is only to be gathered from the expressed opinion of their representatives.

Public
meetings.

That some appeal to the people must be made was so evident, that Mr. Fox, misjudging, perhaps, the state of the public mind, had taunted ministers for not submitting their pretensions to that test. "Where is that popularity," he said, "of the present administration in which they confide? why do not gentlemen call meetings, muster their friends and partizans, and carry their addresses to the throne? Till this is done, till the fact is proved, I for one will question its truth*."

London
address.21st January.
Middlesex.

The experiment had before been partially made by the City of London, where an address, favourable to ministers, had been voted and graciously received. The county of Middlesex had also been convened, and an address was carried, on a shew of hands, representing to his Majesty the alarming state of public affairs, and requesting him to appoint such an administration as might possess the confidence of Parliament and the public. It was denied that this address contained the real sense of the county; and, it being asserted in a re-

* Debate, 2nd February.

quisition, signed by upward of one hundred inhabitant freeholders, that the room where this meeting was convened was not sufficiently capacious, another public meeting was appointed*, at which an address and resolutions of a directly opposite tendency were voted. The endeavours of the late ministers and their adherents to impede the business of the nation were said to be founded on private, interested, and factious motives, and not on public principles. The attempt to constrain his Majesty to restore the ministers, whom, in his wisdom and justice, he had displaced, was censured as an encroachment on the prerogative, and contrary to the sense of the whole kingdom; and the representatives of the country were required equally to oppose every encroachment on the prerogative of the Crown, and on the rights of the people†.

In Westminster, a still fiercer struggle was maintained. An address was presented to the King, by the Deputy-Steward, and Sir Cecil Wray, one of the members for that city, purporting to proceed from the Dean, High Steward, and other officers, and signed by two thousand eight hundred and thirty-four burgesses, condemning the India bill, thanking his Majesty for having dismissed the ministers by whom it was proposed, and assuring him of their confidence in the present administration.

A meeting was speedily convened at the Shakspeare tavern in Covent Garden, where resolutions were passed, declaring that signatures had been assumed to the late address without the express consent of parties, or obtained by private solicitation, without public notice, and approbation was expressed of Mr. Fox's parliamentary conduct. Sir Cecil Wray and his friends immediately held a public meeting in the Court of Requests in Westminster Hall, where, it is said, three thousand persons attended, and where another address, similar to the first, was voted; but, it having been intimated that the place of meeting had

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Westminster.

2nd February.
Address.

5th.
Meeting at the
Shakspeare
tavern.

10th.
Meeting in
Westminster
Hall.

* The first was held at a room in a tavern near London, called the Shepherd and Shepherdess; the latter at a tavern called the Mermaid, at Hackney.

† New Annual Register, vol. v.

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14th.

been so early occupied by the other party, that Mr. Fox's friends could not gain admittance, the meeting was adjourned for four days. On this occasion, a scene of great disorder and tumult was exhibited. Sir Cecil Wray was about to assume the place of chairman, according to the call of the assembly, when the platform of the hustings broke down, and the chair was torn to pieces; Mr. Fox was borne by his friends to the front, and attempted to address the people, when, in the contest, the hustings again broke, and Mr. Fox being thrown down, a miscreant cast in his face a bag, containing some offensive drug. Screams, yells, and clamours of party prevented the possibility of an address being heard, until Mr. Fox, borne along by the crowd, retreated through the Court of Common Pleas, accompanied by his friends. Attention was then granted to Lord Mahon; a resolution was passed, confirming the proceedings in the Court of Requests, while Mr. Fox harangued his party in Palace Yard, from a window in the King's Arms Tavern. No address or resolution was moved on his part; but the populace took the horses from his carriage, and drew him to Devonshire House, stopping while he received congratulations at Carlton House, and other residences of his noble friends, and marking with characteristic insults, but no violence, the abode of Lord Temple, and some others, whom they deemed his enemies*.

Effect of these
meetings.

Not to mention the public proceedings in other parts of the kingdom, these events, occurring on the very scene of political contest, afforded no grounds of hope to the opposition. Strong in no place but within the House of Commons, they could only expect a favourable termination to their efforts from the flexibility of the Sovereign, who might yield to repeated addresses, or from the alarm of government, at the suggestion that supplies might be refused, or the usual powers for governing the army withheld. It is not to be believed that either project had been seriously en-

* See New Annual Register, vol. v. p. 132; and a pamphlet called A full and authentic Account of the Proceedings in Westminster Hall.

tertained by any leader of opposition; but a sufficient display of power had already been made to occasion some apprehension. Surmises had been expressed on the subject; and in public meetings and party publications, where responsibility imposed no restraint, the topic was discussed according to the dictates of anger or fear.

An explicit declaration on the subject of supply was made, and a display of the power of opposition exhibited, when the report of the committee, so far as related to the ordnance estimates, was moved for. Mr. Fox said, that, in the present situation of affairs, it was not surely expected that the House would proceed to vote supplies, until it should be known whether his Majesty would give any or what answer to the resolutions of the House, especially as the vote proposed, would be conclusive and a pledge. Yet he denied all intention of refusing, although he meant to suspend, the supply; and, as the House was not fully attended, it was agreed that the report should be recommitted. When it was again brought up, Mr. Pitt, having stated that his Majesty had not, in compliance with the resolutions of the House, dismissed his ministers, nor had they resigned, Mr. Fox, with uncommon warmth, declared that such language had never been heard in that House since the revolution, or at least since the accession of the present royal family. What was it, but a flat and peremptory negative to the sentiments and wishes of his Majesty's faithful Commons, who, ardently desirous of the public welfare, and the honour of every branch of the legislature, had taken the most cautious and delicate means, not only of preventing a breach, but even of closing it when made? He urged the House to waive the question of supplies for a very short period, that gentlemen might come, on a future day, perfectly awake to the situation in which they were placed. The particular supply now moved for was not immediately indispensable, and no material disadvantage could accrue from a very short adjournment. He shuddered to debate a proposition of such mag-

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LVI.

1784.

Proceedings
respecting
supplies.
10th.

18th Feb.

CHAP.
LVI.

1784.

Motion by
Mr. Powys.

20th.

Mr. Eden's
amendment.

Debate.

nitude. "Tempus inane peto, requiem, spatiumque
"furori."

He moved that, instead of "now*," the report be received on "Friday." In debating this proposition, the proceedings of the members, who met at the Saint Alban's Tavern, and the causes of the failure of that negotiation, were much discussed. The division, even when the most qualified sense was put on the motion, was far from triumphant, the majority being twelve only†.

With this effort, the attempts of the opposition on the subject of supply ended; but more direct measures were pursued for effecting the expulsion of the ministry. Mr. Powys, who, on several occasions, had appeared to struggle for the establishment of an united administration, moved an address, requesting that the King would take measures for giving effect to the declared wishes of the Commons. He hoped that Mr. Pitt would consider, again and again, before he determined on persisting in opinions diametrically opposite to those of the House. What were the supports to which he looked? The confidence of the House of Lords! Their address had not one word directly in his favour. It was a mere neutral manifesto. The people were, undoubtedly, on his side; but they were attached to his personal virtues and accomplishments. The glory of his father's public life shed a lustre on him; but the people could not ground their attachment on any thing he had yet achieved for the country.

This motion not appearing sufficiently pointed, an amendment was proposed by Mr. Eden, and adopted by the mover, referring to obstacles which impeded the formation of such an administration as the House had declared to be requisite.

In a vigorous debate, topics of general policy and personal reflection were unsparingly resorted to; but the speeches, although eloquent and able, afford little

* That is Wednesday.

† 208 to 196. This measure was termed, by a writer of the day, "tacking
"Mr. Fox to a money bill." Second Letter to a Country Gentleman, p. 15.

instruction from their profoundness, or amusement from their novelty. The motion was carried by a majority*; and an address to the King, recapitulating its terms, was sanctioned by a majority of twenty-one†: the House did not rise until five o'clock in the morning‡.

To this address, the King answered, that he was deeply sensible how highly it concerned the honour of his Crown and interests of his people that public affairs should be conducted by a firm, efficient, united, and extended administration, entitled to the confidence of his people. "I shall always," he added, "be desirous of taking every step most conducive to such an object; but I cannot see that it would, in any degree, be advanced by the dismissal of those at present in my service. I observe, at the same time, that there is no charge or complaint suggested against my present ministers, nor is any one or more of them specifically objected to; and numbers of my subjects have expressed to me, in the warmest manner, their satisfaction in the late changes I have made in my councils. Under these circumstances, I trust my faithful Commons will not wish that the essential offices of executive government should be vacated, until I see a prospect that such a plan of union as I have called for, and they have pointed out, may be carried into effect."

Mr. Powys moved, first, that the King's answer should be taken into consideration on the ensuing Monday, which was agreed to, with little observation. He then proposed that the House should immediately adjourn until that day. In the debate, much heat was

CHAP.
LVI.

1784.
Address voted.

25th.
The King's
answer.

17th.
Motion of
Mr. Powys
thereon.

* 197 to 177.

† 177 to 156.

‡ In this debate, Sir Richard Hill, a gentleman of known piety, frequent in citation of the Holy Scriptures, and brother of the pious and benevolent Rowland Hill, quoted, as apposite to the present attempt of the opposition majority, a burlesque address of Parliament, and the answer of Charles the Second, written by the celebrated and profligate Earl of Rochester. The reference to such an author, by such a man, was remarked on in the House, both with pleasantry as to the contrast between the author and recitor of the passage, and with severity as to the times from which it was drawn. Nor was Sir Richard forgotten, when the sins committed in the House were castigated with the lash of the press. See Probationary Odes and Criterions on the Rolliad.

CHAP.
LVI.

1784.

1st March.
Speech and
motion of
Mr. Fox.

displayed; the delay being treated as a mere manœuvre to obstruct the grant of supplies, and other public business: but it was carried by a majority of seven*.

On the day appointed, Mr. Fox pressed on the consideration of the House the peculiar circumstances in which they, the people of England, and the constitution of the country were placed by his Majesty's answer. He reviewed some transactions of the late reign, to shew that no power or pretension could enable a minister to retain his station when the confidence of the House of Commons had been withdrawn. He recapitulated all the grounds of complaint so often urged against the manner in which the cabinet had been formed, and repeated all the sentiments calculated to inspire the House with a resolution to maintain their own rights and dignity. He moved an address, representing the satisfaction of the House at his Majesty's benevolent assurances; but, with all humility, claiming a right and a duty to advise him on the exercise of any branch of his prerogative, and requesting that he would enable them to form a new administration, and would previously remove his present ministers.

Debate.

In the debate, it was argued, that, although no specific charge could be made against ministers, want of confidence was a sufficient ground for their removal, without any defined accusation.

Mr Pitt.

Many members spoke in support of the ministry, and Mr. Pitt vindicated himself against the charge of being averse to union, and seeking to annihilate the privileges of the House; but he felt equally obliged to defend the just and constitutional prerogatives of the sovereign. Their right to advise could not be disputed; but he could not allow that their vote of disapprobation should, *ipso facto*, bind and compel the sovereign to dismiss his ministers, or oblige them to resign. The sins of the present administration had been stated; and one of the most glaring was, that the late ministry were dismissed against the sense of the House. To

maintain that the King could not dismiss or retain ministers but according to their approbation, would be to place the royal sceptre under the Speaker's mace. History afforded no instance in which a ministry had been called on to retire from office without a cause. An attempt was made to prevent a decision, by moving the previous question; but Mr. Pitt thought it better that the sense of the House should be taken on the original motion, and he was in a minority of twelve*.

In answer to this address, his Majesty repeated his desire to form such an administration as they recommended; but was convinced that object could not be attained by the dismissal of his present ministers; and repeated his former observation that no specific charge had been advanced against any of them. This answer was sufficient to extinguish all hopes, if they really existed, that the King's firmness might ultimately yield to repeated attacks. It was received with apparent surprise and indignation, and when the consideration of it had been fixed for the ensuing Monday †, an objection was successfully made to entering on any other business until that should have been disposed of, which concerned the privileges and dignity of the House. The supplies and the mutiny bill were therefore deferred.

Expectation was raised to the highest pitch for the debate; and, probably, it was not disappointed; for Mr. Fox came prepared to express, in the full energy of his powerful oratory, the feelings which laboured in his bosom: but the debate is only imperfectly reported‡,

CHAP.
LVI.

1781.

Address
carried.

4th Mar. the
King's answer.

Further
proceedings.

8th. Debate
on the King's
answer.

* 189 to 201.

† That is, in four days: the 4th was Wednesday, and Monday the 8th.

‡ The cause of this defect is thus given by the compilers of the Parliamentary Debates — The expectations of the public were so uncommonly excited to hear the important proceedings of the House this day, that members took the trouble of going down with their friends to procure them admission to the gallery at ten o'clock in the morning. By eleven, the place allotted for strangers was crowded; and the gentlemen sat with the utmost patience from that hour till four in the afternoon without any business. At that time counsel were heard on Nisbett's divorce bill; and just as the House was proceeding to the important business for which the relations and friends of the members had undergone so much fatigue, Sir James Lowther rose, and complained that, on bringing down his friend, the brother of the member for St. Alban's, he found it impossible to procure a seat in the gallery, though it was only half-past three; and this being the case, and also because he had reason to believe that there might be strangers in the gallery not introduced by members, he insisted on carrying into force the standing order,

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LVI.

1754.

Mr. Fox moves
a representa-
tion to the
King.

and a great part of his, and of several other eloquent speeches, cannot be known.

He began with a view of the critical condition of the country, and of his own situation, displaying, in vivid colours, the state of the representative body, which was to be deluded or enslaved into obedience to the Crown and its secret advisers. As to the King's answer, he could not have thought it possible for any minister to put into the mouth of majesty such contradictions and such scandalous duplicity: there were passages in it big with danger to liberty. He could not have believed that Mr. Pitt had so deserted the constitution, that he would have dared so to insult the House, as again to ask for the reasons of their resolutions. Every beggar, in every arbitrary country, had a right to petition his King, stating the reasons of his petition; and this, forsooth, was the whole mighty privilege that the King was advised to allow. That the British House of Commons had often addressed, without stating their reasons, he shewed from several precedents. He should move, not an address, but an humble representation to his Majesty; for to that no answer was customary. All things considered, he said he did not intend to stop the supplies: that the country was ruined, and completely undone, was most clear. Public credit could not exist; and our foreign concerns must run to ruin: all this must be now obvious to every man. For his part, far from stopping the supplies, he should press ministers to bring forward the public business: he would bring on his own amended India Bill; but if it was lost in the upper House, ministers were bound to produce some other new plan; and, indeed, every part of our public affairs cried aloud for their instant attention. In addition to these expressions, which sufficiently denoted chagrin and disappointment, Mr. Fox noticed the altered aspect of his party's influence in the House. He defended Mr.

and desired that all strangers might be ordered to withdraw. Many members interfered, and with great earnestness solicited the honourable Baronet to recede from his motion; but Sir James persevered, and the gallery was cleared accordingly.

Powys and Mr. Marsham, who would not abet the ministers in their resistance to the Commons; but some there were, who had agreed with him in the outset of the dispute, but who, as appeared by the decrease of the majorities, had gone over to the side of administration. It was some comfort to find that those who had come over to him were every way respectable; while those who had left him, were men of whose society no one was ever ambitious.

He moved a long representation to the King, testifying the surprise and affliction of the House on receiving the answer which his ministers had advised to their dutiful and seasonable address; and, after many severe reflections, asserted that they who had advised the answer had caused his Majesty to act in direct contradiction to his own assurances that he was ready to receive the advice of the Commons, by neglecting that advice, and retaining ministers, whose continuance in office they had so repeatedly and distinctly condemned. In conclusion, the House claimed their privilege of withholding supplies; and if, in consideration of the peculiar exigencies of the times, they should be induced to waive the exercise, in this instance, of their undoubted legal, constitutional right, they implored his Majesty not to impute their forbearance to any want of sincerity in their complaints, or distrust in the justice of their cause

Mr. Dundas vigorously opposed this representation, and reprobated the principles it contained. He had long ago attempted to stop the House in their mad and desperate career; and he had been charged with audacity for the attempt; but he was determined again to step forth, and remonstrate against the absurdity, the utter impropriety, the inutility, and, at the same time, the danger and the mischief of the present motion. It was the final consummation of a monstrous system of outrage on the constitution. He lamented that Mr. Fox dared not in this, his manifesto, avow to the world those principles which he and others had dared to avow in their speeches. Why would he not claim for the House a right of negativing his Majesty's

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LVI.

1781.

Mr. Dundas.

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LVI.

1784.

appointment of ministers, without giving a single reason? Why send it to his Majesty, forbidding at the same time any answer? Why not publish it to the world, after the manner of other manifestos, with a becoming title? and then counter declarations might be published, which would bring the matter to a fair issue. The right honourable gentleman had been prudent enough to insert in his manifesto that it was not the punishment, but merely the removal, of ministers that he wished: the world would at least give him credit for that part of the declaration; to get their places, they would readily believe, was all he wanted; and that he could give no reason why they ought to be turned out, and why he should come in, would as readily be believed.

Other
speeches.

Several other members joined in the debate; among them, Mr. Burke is said to have made a speech of two hours' duration; but not a sentence of it is preserved. Toward the conclusion, Sir Richard Hill recited some doggerel lines of his own composition, in which Mr. Fox was designated by an appellative then frequently applied to him, that of Carlo Khan. This aroused the indignation of Lord North, who said it was exactly that kind of nonsense about Carlo Khan which had misled the weak part of the country so strangely*.

Representa-
tion voted.

On a division, the majority for the motion was only one†.

* This name, I believe, originated in a humorous and very popular caricature, published before the rejection of the first India bill, entitled "Carlo Khan's triumphal Entry into Leadenhall Street." In front of the India House was seen a person, dressed in eastern robes, seated in state on an elephant; the beast bearing a striking resemblance to Lord North, the rider to Mr. Fox; while a hircarrah, equally like Mr. Burke, led the elephant. If the effect of these publications could be doubted, it is confirmed by the manner in which they are mentioned by Dr. Parr, in his celebrated preface to Bellendenus. He says, "We often call those times to our remembrance, when they, who are very inadequate judges of the delicate predicament of public affairs, could feed their wondering eyes and fickle spirits by gazing at trifling pictures; when they viewed as their opponents such a man as Pericles, marked by a trifling imperfection, they called to their aid some Pauson, or some Bupalus. They were in all respects equal to the work they had undertaken. By certain drawings, full of malignant allusions, they effected that which has been related of Cleander, whose sarcastic wit and ridicule alone removed a certain governor from the administration of Egypt, who had really been guilty of no crime."—Parr's Works, vol. iii. p. 150. Beloe's translation, p. 77.

† Grecian painters of caricatures.

† 191 to 190. Dr. Watson, Bishop of Landaff, in his Anecdotes, vol. i. p. 209,

This was, in effect, the last struggle made by the opposition. The supplies, which had been impeded for some short period, were finally granted; and the mutiny bill, notwithstanding some delays and some menaces, passed before the time when the former act would expire. Slight debates on minor points, such as Sawbridge's annual reform motion, and a bill for preventing bribery at elections, shewed that both sides of the House expected a speedy dissolution, although it was strenuously deprecated by the opposition. It could not, therefore, be termed a surprise, when his Majesty, in a short speech, prorogued the session; announcing that he felt it his duty to the constitution and to the country to recur, as speedily as possible, to the sense of his people, by calling a new Parliament. A proclamation to that effect appeared on the following day.

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LVI.

1784.

Other business.
22nd.

22nd and 23rd.

24th.
Prorogation
and dissolution
of Parliament.

25th.

expresses his opinion of these transactions in ample terms. "Mr. Pitt had, for several weeks previous to its dissolution, continued in office in direct opposition to the majority of the House of Commons. I looked upon this proceeding as establishing a dangerous precedent; for, though the House could not be justified in censuring a minister who had done no act that was censurable, yet it is to be dreaded that the precedent thus set, of continuing a minister in his place in opposition to a majority of the House of Commons, may hereafter be resorted to by the Crown on occasions less justifiable. The numberless addresses, however, which were presented to the King against the coalition ministry, sufficiently shewed the sense of the people to be with Mr. Pitt. It was not so much the prerogative of the Crown which kept Mr. Pitt in his place, and set the House of Commons at defiance, as it was the sense of the nation; which, on this occasion, was in direct contradiction to the sense of the House of Commons." He wrote a letter to Mr. Pitt, fully expressing these sentiments, and adds, "I had mentioned to Mr. Pitt, a little time before, the rescinding of these resolutions of the House of Commons, as the first business which ought to be brought forward in the new Parliament; and he seemed at that time wholly to agree with me in the propriety of the measure; but he changed his mind, or was overruled by men more inclined to exalt the prerogative of the Crown than to listen to the voice of the people, for nothing of the kind was ever mentioned in the House of Commons." With all due respect to the Reverend Prelate, and without recurring to the causes he has assigned, it appears that Mr. Pitt acted most correctly. The votes in question did not, like those on the Middlesex election which were rescinded, affect any general public right; when they had passed, they had done their office; and neither their existence nor their revocation could be made a precedent by any party for any available purpose. A repeal of them would have looked like a puerile triumph: left as they are, they form only an historical fact; but, beyond what was personal in carrying them, do not afford matter for a single comment.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-SEVENTH.

1784.

Importance of the late contest.—Effect of the anti-ministerial majority.—State of the House of Lords.—Firmness of the King.—Conduct of the Prince of Wales—on the attempt at union of parties.—Public opinion.—Addresses to Mr. Pitt.—Freedom of London presented to him.—His conduct.—Observations on the dissolution of Parliament.—Failure of the opposition party at the elections.—Contest for Westminster—scrutiny granted.—Return to the precept.—Meeting of Parliament.—King's speech.—Address of the Lords—of the Commons.—Mr. Burke moves an address and representation.—Motion on the Westminster election.—Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt.—Motion negatived.—Observations of Mr. Adam—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Fox's petition.—Other petitions.—Counsel heard.—State of finances.—The budget.—Privilege of franking letters restrained.—Extent of smuggling.—Commutation Act.—Hovering Act.—Purchases of tea by the East India Company.—Arrear of the Civil List.—Affairs of the East India Company.—Temporary relief.—Mr. Pitt moves to bring in his bill for better government of India.—Observations of Mr. Fox.—Bill brought in.—Motion for its going into a committee opposed.—Speeches of Mr. Francis—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Fox—Mr. Dundas.—Expressions imputed to Lord Thurlow.—Bill passes.—Substance of its enactments.—Observations.—Motion against Sir Elijah Impey—and Mr. Hastings.—Restoration of forfeited estates in Scotland—moved by Mr. Dundas—supported by the opposition members—opposed by the Lord Chancellor—passed.—Prorogation.

THE records of history would be searched in vain for a parallel to the contest between the King and the House of Commons, which has been thus minutely related; a contest conducted with so much zeal, and terminated without violence. A majority of the House, without any ground of complaint, except their dislike of the minister the King had chosen, maintained a conflict with the Crown which lasted three months, to the utter obstruction of important and truly urgent business. The pecuniary accounts of the late war, the state of finances, the revival of trade and renewal of commercial connexions, the prevention of contraband dealing, which had now risen to an enormous height, the interests of Ireland, matters of internal and colonial policy; and, not least of all, the great and overwhelming subject of India; all pressed for consideration, and all were disregarded for mere questions of personal ambition. A majority of the House of Commons alone, when resisted by the King, counteracted in the Lords, and not supported by the people, formed an extremely narrow and insecure basis for raising a superstructure suited to the views of ambition; and the leaders of opposition must have felt more anger and mortification than astonishment, when they found the triumphant band of adherents which had carried Mr. Fox's India bill by more than two to one, and had shouted derision on the announcement of Mr. Pitt as Chancellor of the Exchequer, reduced, on a night of great expectation, in a debate of vital importance, to a majority of one only, when three hundred and eighty one members were present. In fact, they might have obstructed public business; they could obtain an address or a representation to the Throne, but could not give effect to any legislative general measure. Had they refused the supplies, they would have withheld the claims of the public creditor; had they prevented the mutiny bill, they would have placed the army on the footing of an ungoverned mob, with arms in their hands, inadequate to restrain, but very able to produce, alarm, distress, and confusion. From such measures even the intrepidity of Mr. Fox would have

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1784.

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the late con-
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rial majority.

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shrunk, had they been seriously suggested; or if he and a few more had the courage to make the attempt, it was not probable that considerate and loyal men would have continued their adherence. Both proceedings were intimated and threatened; but a definitive effort was never ventured. Mr. Fox, when moving his address for removal of ministers, said, "why, it had been asked, were the supplies not withheld? The reason on which he had hitherto voted for the supplies might appear a paradox; he had not sufficient confidence in the ministers of the day to withhold the supplies. This, he had always maintained, was a weapon given to the House for the advantage of the community at large. Were they certain that such a vote could bring back the servants of the Crown to constitutional ground, and re-establish the consequence and importance of the House, he would willingly proceed to that extent; but, if the measure were resisted, into what difficulty did it plunge them? what infinite and irreparable confusion would it not occasion in the country?" And, afterward, when the postponement of the mutiny bill was proposed, Mr. Fox, although he professed that power over a standing army ought not to be entrusted to a minister whom the House had declared unworthy of its confidence, would not reject it altogether; but its duration might be limited to a month or two; at all events, there would be sufficient time, as the present act would not expire in less than three weeks*, to prevent any dangerous consequences. With all this explanation, he had a majority of nine only†; and probably a little indiscretion, in any part of his speech, would have decided the question against him.

5th.

State of the
House of
Lords.

As no bill of public interest or importance was transmitted from the lower to the upper House, and as no motion on public affairs originated in the Lords, except one which has already been mentioned, no other

* Viz. on the 25th of March.

† 171 to 162; and see also Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 300, 313, et passim.

debate occurred in which the feelings and temper of the peers were particularly disclosed; yet it was perfectly known that the majority of that body would not have concurred with the predominant party in the House of Commons. Consequently very little public business was transmitted to them. Before the recess, they had passed bills for the land-tax and malt duty; but, from that time until within a few days of the dissolution, only two public general acts were sent up to the Lords; and they were not of a nature to call forth any discussion*.

In all his acts and declarations, the King had shewn his determination to support the ministry he had appointed; and if it was sought to conquer him by hostile speeches, addresses, and remonstrances, Lord North, at least, had enjoyed sufficient intercourse with the Sovereign to be sure that his firmness was not so to be broken down. It is now ascertained, by the letters of the King himself, that he viewed the probable expulsion of Mr. Pitt from office, and the re-instatement of his adversaries, with undissembled horror. On the first divisions against the minister, the King, in a letter to him, treated his opponents as desperate men, and as a faction whom he was prepared to resist, and maintain the struggle to the last period of his life. "If they in the end succeed," his Majesty said, "my line is a clear one, and to which I have fortitude to submit†." If this last phrase could be deemed ambiguous or equivocal, it was fully explained on the day Lord Effingham made his motion. The King then said, "Should not the Lords stand boldly forth, this constitution must soon be changed; for if the two only remaining privileges of the Crown are infringed, that of negating bills which have passed both Houses of Parliament, and that of naming the ministers to be employed, I cannot but feel, as far as regards my person, that I can be no longer of utility to this country, nor can with honour remain in this island." From this ex-

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1784.

Firmness of
the King.

12th January.

4th Feb.

* One related to the postage of letters from Ireland; the other to the receipt tax.

† Tomline's Life of Mr. Pitt, vol. i. p. 28

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tract, Mr. Pitt's biographer observes, coupled with the conclusion of his former letter, as well as from other authorities, it is evident that the King had, at the time, serious intentions of retiring to Hanover, in case Mr. Fox and his party should prevail*. Such declarations must, however, be viewed with caution. It may easily be conceived that the thought of retiring to his Hanoverian dominions may have crossed the King's mind, as a resource in case of extremity; and when he used the expressions from which the intention is inferred, he was perfectly sincere; but it is not easy to believe that, under any circumstances, it would have been carried into execution. The throne of Great Britain and Ireland, however it might be beset with difficulties, was not to be hastily renounced. George the Third knew history too well, and had read mankind too attentively, to expect that, if he vacated his dominions, powerful voices would be raised sufficient to procure his recall on his own terms. Born and bred in this country, glorying in the name of Briton, used to sway, and surrounded by a large family, he could hardly have reduced himself to the situation of a minor potentate, an elector, to live among people to whom, in every respect, he was a mere alien.

With feelings so much excited against those whom he termed a desperate faction, as unprincipled and mischievous as ever embroiled the affairs of any country†, his Majesty viewed their ultimate failure with the joy that is experienced on being freed from a powerful and dangerous adversary. "Mr. Pitt's letter," the King said, "is undoubtedly the most satisfactory I have received for many months. An avowal, on the outset, that the proposition held forth is not intended to go farther lengths than a kind of manifesto; and then carrying it by a majority of one only; and the day concluded with an avowal that all negotiation is at an end; give me every reason to hope that, by a firm and proper conduct, this faction will, by

* Tomline's Life of Mr. Pitt, vol. i. p. 253.

† Same, p. 337.

“degrees, be deserted by many, and at length be forgotten. I shall ever, with pleasure, consider that, by the prudence, as well as rectitude, of one person in the House of Commons, this great change has been effected; and that he will ever be able to reflect with satisfaction that, in having supported me, he has saved the constitution, the most perfect of human formation.”

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While such sentiments were entertained, and only disclosed confidentially by the King, those of the Prince of Wales, publicly and explicitly avowed, were diametrically opposite, although his Royal Highness, as a peer of Parliament, would not sustain, by his vote, measures which he had reason to believe were unpleasant to his father. Thus, while he sided with the friends of Mr. Fox's India bill, on the first division, he abstained from appearing on the second, when the King's disapprobation of the measure was announced, apparently from authority. Still the persons forming the opposition were the most favoured and intimate of his friends; and, during the meetings at the St. Alban's tavern, magnificent entertainments were made for them at Carlton House.

Conduct of the
Prince of
Wales.

To those who considered the possession of office the only matter in contest, to those who fancied that, if Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt could once be brought to sit in a cabinet together, all differences of opinion would be surrendered or compromised, the communications commenced for the purpose of union might present some pleasing hopes; but those who reflected more cautiously, could anticipate no beneficial result. While the clamour was so loud and general against a coalition, such a coalition as was proposed would have destroyed all hopes of confidence in public men. Even while some were willing to believe that a favourable result might be expected, the language used in Parliament was as lofty and exasperating as ever; the desire of peace was never expressed, although each side professed to have no objection to an arrangement; but every declaration was accompanied with qualifications and suggestions which seemed to place the desired

On the at-
tempts at union
of parties

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object at a hopeless distance. In fact, when party disputes attain a high degree of violence, some benevolent and respectable persons are always found to promote what they consider an amicable adjustment: experienced statesmen do not expect useful consequences from such interventions; but they cannot be rejected by either side, for fear of consigning numbers and influence to the other. In the present instance, the matter terminated fortunately, and without mortification to any. The King, having reluctantly consented that his name should be introduced, had no reason to regret the result. The Duke of Portland, knowing the impossibility of an effectual arrangement, acted with wisdom and dignity, in keeping aloof from discussions which must be useless; and Mr. Pitt must indeed have been unworthy of any public trust if he had resigned office as a preliminary to the inquiry whether he was fit to hold it or not. It was said that the matter terminated in a mere verbal or grammatical distinction; but it was more desirable to all parties that it should so end, than that the broad and general principles of government should have become the topics of abstract discussion, and formed the line of distinction among practical statesmen.

Public
opinion.

When the leading powers of the state were thus divided, the final decision of the dispute necessarily devolved upon the people, and they testified their opinion with unwonted readiness and concord. Very soon after the rejection of the India bill, and the change of ministers, the corporation and the merchants and traders of London presented addresses of thanks, with assurances of support, to the King. Of Middlesex and Westminster, mention already has been made, and, during the first three months of the year, almost every gazette contained several of these public documents, replete with professions of loyalty and declarations of satisfaction*. Before the experiment had been fully tried, the opposition tauntingly defied

* In the Chronicle of the New Annual Register for 1784, between the 24th of January and the 1st of April, addresses are enumerated from fifty-six counties, cities, and towns.

the ministers to demonstrate their popularity by appealing to the people. When it had been made, they attempted to diminish its value and deny its importance. It was said the addresses were obtained by mere imposture, and it was doubted whether or not the people understood the matter they addressed upon. Such observations drew forth from Mr. Pitt a happy specimen of sarcastic humour. He saw, with astonishment, the man of the people undervaluing the sentiments of the people; ridiculed the defeat the party had experienced at Reading, although supported by Colonel Hartley, member for the town; while from Hackney, a field of Mars, that valiant chieftain, the county member, had returned to the House, his brow not adorned with the wreath of victory, but issuing from his mouth a most lamentable history of flight and defeat. He also adverted to the fate of Mr. Fox at Westminster, where he once could charm the multitude into dumb admiration of his eloquence, and into silent gratitude for his exertions in the cause of freedom and of his country. Was he, the champion of the people, once emphatically named the man of the people, now content with the execrations of those multitudes who once, perhaps too much, adored him? Speaking of the spirit which animated the promoters of the addresses, Sir Horace Mann said, that on his appealing to one body of his friends, they answered they had been his friends once, but he was joined with those who wished to set up a Lord-Protector.

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1784.

20th February.

1st March.

To Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, numerous addresses of applause and congratulation were sent from all parts of the kingdom*. The Corporation of London stood foremost. The freedom of the City was presented in a gold box; and, when he went to take the oaths, a splendid entertainment was given at Grocer's Hall. A committee of the Corporation waited on him at his residence, conducted him into the City with all the display of a triumph, and the procession of the magistracy,

Address to
Mr. Pitt.

Freedom of
London.

* Of these addresses, the Bishop of Winchester says thirty-six came into his hands after Mr. Pitt's death, and many were not preserved. *Life of Mr. Pitt*, vol. i. p. 326 n.

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1781.

the display of the civic banners, and the unbounded acclamations of an immense multitude, proved how truly the Chamberlain, Mr. Wilkes, uttered the sentiments of all the citizens in a speech highly complimentary to him, and very severe on his opponents*.

If the youth of Mr. Pitt furnished topics of sarcasm and invective to his adversaries; if it afforded Mr. Fox the means of suggesting that the House would teach such very young men not to yield so readily to the calls of ambition; and to predict that his administration could not possibly be permanent; the extraordinary prudence and judgment displayed by this very young man must have occasioned sensations of dismay, and anticipations of defeat. In the midst of irritating invectives, uttered by men whose talent gave them all their force, and whose character and experience augmented their effect, he maintained a cautious reserve, from which he never deviated, and a dignified self-possession, which made the blows aimed at him fall innoxious, or recoil on those who inflicted them. His eloquence, already so well known and so highly appreciated, was kept in strict obedience to the mere necessities of the debate; he chiefly endeavoured to afford his antagonists no new topics arising from any of his speeches. Thus their declamations became wearisome, through frequent repetition, and often seemed vague and general, because no new fact or argument was furnished by the minister. Yet, although he often complained of the assertions and inferences of the opposition, Mr. Pitt's tone was never humble or querulous; he never courted forbearance or deprecated censure: so that his speeches were equally secure against the charges of haughtiness and meanness, and he well merited the compliment paid by his sovereign, when he praised him for using a razor

22nd Feb.

* See Wilkes's Speeches, 8vo, 1786. In his return from the City at night, Mr. Pitt was subjected to a brutal and ferocious insult. After the greater portion of his attendants had quitted him, as the carriage, drawn by men, was proceeding along St. James's Street, a number of persons, armed with bludgeons and broken chair poles, made a furious and unexpected attack on the carriage, forced open the doors, beat and maltreated the attendants, and aimed several blows at the minister himself, who was bravely defended by his brother, the Earl of Chatham, and at length escaped unhurt into a neighbouring house.

against his antagonists, and never condescending to run into rudeness*.

From the bitter manner in which Mr. Fox complained of being deserted by some of his late adherents, and the abstinence of his party from opposing the progress of public business during the latter days of the session, it appeared to some that the minister might have proceeded without dissolving the Parliament; but a slight review of the history of that House of Commons will shew the impossibility of such a proceeding. Called during Lord North's administration, it had, for one whole session, and a great portion of another, sanctioned the American war, and favoured all his measures for its vigorous prosecution. They had afterward withdrawn their support, declared disapprobation of the war, and obliged him to resign. The Rockingham administration had their countenance during a part of a session; but when that ministry was dissolved, by the death of the Marquis, the House was supposed to be divided under three chiefs, in such a manner as to render it impossible for any one party to conduct the business of the nation, if opposed by the other two. Under these circumstances, that unpopular union, called the coalition, was formed; it drove Lord Shelburne and Mr. Pitt from the helm; supported its own leaders as ministers with a triumphant majority, until the King thought fit to dismiss them, and then opposed the new administration with majorities fluctuating between fifty-four and one†. Had this House been brought to sustain the existing administration, the respect and confidence of the people could not have attended them. Mr. Pitt could not, consistently with his professions and feelings, have submitted to their support, unless they had rescinded all the obnoxious votes and resolutions they had made; and had they done so, their position would have been disgraceful, and even contemptible.

Another question arises, why the dissolution was so long delayed? When the supplies immediately re-

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1784.
On the dissolution.

* Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 339, n.

† See the Divisions, Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 343.

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quired had been granted, there was ample time, before the expiration of the mutiny act, to have convened a new Parliament; the King was known to be not averse to the measure, and it was earnestly pressed for by many of Mr. Pitt's adherents. Had impatience under provocations, and even insults, or had any hope of immediate security and advantage, influenced the minister to adopt such a course, he might have been justified at the moment; but the applause of magnanimity and true wisdom must have been withheld from him. He never considered the time fully come for such an act, until the opposition had displayed at large all their principles and powers, until the progress of national affairs had been so obstructed, as to demonstrate that private views and not the general good actuated their proceedings, until a political reconciliation between the parties, and the formation of an union, had proved impossible; and, above all, until the unequivocal and ample disclosure of the public mind had shewn, that by the removal of the present House of Commons, the nation would consider itself not deprived of a support, but eased of a burthen.

Failure of the
opposition
party at the
elections.

Even to the last moment, the opposition members deprecated a dissolution*; they foresaw, in that event, the annihilation of all their power, and the extinction of all their hopes. It cannot be believed that the party bestowed so little consideration on passing events, as to have neglected any means which they could use to secure the return of their friends and adherents. Fear is a powerful monitor, and, during more than two months, their constant fear had been expressed; yet their efforts had been so unpromising, that, in many places, they chose rather to desist from using them than to witness their failure; and, in others, they encountered only mortification and defeat. Upwards of one hundred and sixty members lost their seats, and of these almost all were friends of the late administration. So complete a rout of what was looked upon as one of the strongest and most powerful parties that ever

* See the speeches of Mr. Eden, Lord North, and General Conway, on the 23rd of March. Parliamentary History, vol. xxiv. p. 769.

existed in Great Britain, is scarcely to be credited*. And it may justly be asserted, that on no similar occasion had so little complaint been made that returns were obtained by means of corruption.

Above all the contests, that for Westminster claims notice, from the length of its duration, the eagerness with which it was conducted, its result, and the consequences. The candidates were, Mr. Fox and Sir Cecil Wray, who had represented the city in the last Parliament, and Lord Hood, the great naval commander. The Court, Carlton House, the nobility, men of influence in every rank of life, shared in strenuous and unremitting efforts on the one or the other side. Ladies of the first quality and fashion solicited the suffrages of very humble voters, and person, purse, and pen were all earnestly employed. A large assemblage daily attended the hustings, clamouring for and against the candidates. Taverns and ale-houses were thronged with their numbers, bands of men, armed with bludgeons, were engaged to keep access free for the voters, and daily engagements of great numbers on a side took place, in many of which severe injuries were inflicted, and on one occasion death ensued. The walls were covered with bills, and the newspapers teemed with eulogies and satires. This conflict was maintained to the latest moment allowed by law, to the full period of forty days, and such was the exhausted state of the voters, that in several of those days, in a period of six hours, not so many as twenty were produced. Lord Hood could hardly be considered a contending party, as he was the object of hostility to neither; all the invective and abuse so copiously poured out, were directed against the other two candidates. Until the twenty-third day, Mr. Fox was in a minority; but he then passed his adversary, and finally exhibited on the poll a majority over Sir Cecil Wray of two

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Contest for
Westminster.

1st April to
17th May.

* Copied from the Annual Register, vol. xxvii. p. 147. This work was, at that time, devoted to the interests of the opposition; and, if not written, at least inspected before publication, by one of the most able members of that party. It contains, in the page referred to, and that preceding, an eloquent statement of the causes to which the party were desirous that their defeat should be ascribed.

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Scrutiny
granted.Return to the
precept.18th.
Meeting of
Parliament.19th.
King's speech.

hundred and thirty-six*. When this result was announced, a written paper was delivered to the High Bailiff, the returning officer, signed by Sir Cecil Wray and thirteen electors, demanding a scrutiny: the demand was acceded to, and a day appointed on which it should commence, although Mr. Fox and some of his friends protested against the proceeding. The High Bailiff, in his return to the precept, stated the proceedings, the number of votes for each candidate, and the scrutiny demanded by Sir Cecil Wray, adding that he could not make any other return until the scrutiny should be determined. Westminster, therefore, was without a representative; but Mr. Fox sat in Parliament as member for Kirkwall and the dependant burghs†.

On the meeting of the new Parliament, Mr. Cornwall was unanimously re-elected Speaker; Mr. Fox hailed it as a happy omen that the Speaker of the last Parliament—a Parliament which posterity would pronounce the most glorious that had ever met in this country—was, by the friends of the present administration, called to the chair.

In his speech from the throne, the King expressed his satisfaction at the sentiments of loyalty and attachment to the constitution which the people had every where displayed; recommended temper and wisdom; referred to the estimates, and, after mentioning the supplies, noticed the alarming progress of frauds in the revenue, often attended with violence; and the affairs of the East India Company, an object deeply connected with the general interests of the country. In conclusion, his Majesty declared a resolution uniformly to adhere to the true principles of our free constitution, by supporting and maintaining, in their just balance,

* The numbers were—Lord Hood, 6694; Mr. Fox, 6,234; Sir Cecil Wray, 5998.

† All the facts, and many of the publications in prose and verse, respecting this most extraordinary contest, are collected in a large quarto volume, very laboriously, if not very impartially, compiled, entitled, "History of the Westminster Election, by Lovers of Truth and Justice." It comprised also a full report of the proceedings at the Old Bailey against seven persons who were indicted for the murder, and all were acquitted.

the rights and privileges of every branch of the legislature.

An address was moved by the Earl of Macclesfield, seconded by Lord Falmouth, and, after a few words from Earl Fitzwilliam, censuring the late dissolution as unnecessary and unwarrantable, carried without amendment or division.

In the House of Commons, Mr. John James Hamilton, afterward Marquis of Abercorn, proposed the address, and his motion was seconded by Sir William Molesworth. An amendment, moved by the Earl of Surrey, and seconded by Colonel North, rescinding the paragraph which expressed approbation of the late dissolution, occasioned a debate, in which pledges as to the future, retrospection of the past, charges of inconsistency, and denials or vindications, abounded; but no political point of importance was introduced. The division gave the ministers a majority exceeding two to one*.

A week after the address had been carried, Mr. Burke observed that the King's speech and the address, although couched in pretty general terms, and holding a language far from objectionable in the abstract, involved a variety of weighty and important matters, that called for serious and deliberate discussion; meaning therefore, at some future day, to bring them before the House in such a manner as should challenge their maturest attention, he gave notice of a motion on the subject.

Mr. Pitt, who, in this Parliament, represented the University of Cambridge, made a few observations on a practice so unusual as making remarks on the King's speech when the fittest time, that of moving the address, had elapsed; but Mr. Burke, on the day he had mentioned, moved for an address and representation to the King, which was drawn up with his usual eloquence and ability. He acted solely from himself, he said, without having consulted any; it was not, therefore, a party question, but exclusively his own. In the intended representation, severe animadversions were made on some paragraphs in the King's speech.

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1784.

Address of the
Lords.

24th.
Of the Com-
mons.

31st.
Notice of a
motion by
Mr. Burke.

He moves an
address and
representation.
14th June.

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The allusion to the loyalty of Parliament was construed into an insinuation that there was some occasion for recommending that quality, and the phrase respecting the balance of rights and privileges was wholly foreign to Parliamentary usage. It was recommended that, instead of the inconsiderate speculations of inexperienced men, resort should be had to those solid maxims of government which had prevailed since the accession of his Majesty's family. The rights of each House and the prerogative of the Crown were equally allowed; but prerogative was not to be employed to intimidate individuals from proposing, or the House from receiving or passing, bills. The continuance of ministers in office, the dissolution of Parliament, the India bill, and all the transactions relative to that country, were considered at great length; and, in conclusion, the House was required to exculpate itself by anticipation, if its proceedings should be ill-adapted, feeble, and ineffectual: if delinquency should be proved, and no delinquent called to account; if any person should be caressed, promoted, and raised to power, in proportion to the enormity of his offences; if no relief should be given to the natives of India, and if that empire should fall into ruin irretrievable, and in its fall crush the credit and overwhelm the revenues of the nation. "We stand acquitted to our honour and to our conscience," was the conclusion, "who have reluctantly seen the weightiest interests of our country, at times the most critical to its dignity and safety, rendered the sport of the inconsiderate and unmeasured ambition of individuals, and, by that means, the wisdom of his Majesty's government degraded in the public estimation, and the policy and character of this renowned nation rendered contemptible in the eyes of all Europe."

Mr. Windham seconded the motion; but it was negatived without a division or debate*.

A matter so fertile in topics of discussion as the

18th May.
Motions on
the Westminster
election.

* See the Representation, with preface and notes, Burke's Works, vol. iv. p. 133; and it is faithfully transcribed, with all its appendages, into the Parliamentary History.

Westminster election, could not be passed over without much debate. On the motion for the choice of a speaker, Mr. Fox complained that the House was incomplete, as there were no members for the city in which they were assembled. Parliament was treated in a most contemptuous manner by the High Bailiff. The bare reading of his special return would prove at once how little ground he had for refusing duly to perform his duty: he would move that the consideration of his conduct should precede the address.

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Mr. Fox.

Mr. Pitt observed, that, until a speaker should have been chosen, even the return could not be read.

Mr. Pitt.

After the election of a speaker, and before the address was proposed, the return was read; and Mr. Lee, late Attorney-general, referring to the statute which requires the return of writs of election*, moved that the High Bailiff ought to have returned two citizens to serve in that Parliament.

24th.

Motion by
Mr. Lee.

Sir Lloyd Kenyon, Master of the Rolls, said, the House was now, contrary to the first principles of justice, required to censure and punish, without hearing the accused, and moved the previous question. The statute cited by Mr. Lee related only to returning officers for counties, but did not apply to Mr. Corbett; he was High Bailiff of a city or town, had no writ to send into Chancery, but a precept to be returned to the Sheriff of Middlesex.

Sir Lloyd
Kenyon.

Mr. Fox charged the Master of the Rolls with grossly perverting the axiom *audi alteram partem*. The High Bailiff was, in fact, the only party before the House; his conduct was avowed, and the reasons for it were upon the table. He, himself, was another party: but, although he was actually present as member for another place, still, he was virtually absent; and he observed, that those who had advised the curious return which had been made, had, as far as in them lay, contrived it, that he should not have even the possibility of appealing to any tribunal, except the High Bailiff on a scrutiny. Had Sir Cecil Wray been returned, he might have had redress from a committee.

Mr. Fox.

* 10 and 11 W. III. c. 7.

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The motion was negatived by a majority of ninety-seven*.

1784.
Observations
of Mr. Adam.

Mr. Adam, reverting to the election, took occasion to observe, that the career of ministers had there received a check, a glorious one. If Mr. Fox's election was not unanimous, it might be said to be almost so, considering that he had to contend against all the weight of public office, all the interest of the East India Company, all the opposition of government, and the popular frenzy of the times.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt treated this observation with severity mixed with pleasantry. The right honourable gentlemen had to contend with the powers of public office, because he endeavoured to subvert government; he had to contend with the India Company, because he endeavoured to seize upon their property and most sacred rights; and he had to contend with what was termed the popular frenzy, because the people at large had seen and condemned his conduct. But what allies the right honourable gentleman had to fight for him was not noticed. The degree of influence used in his favour had not been observed upon, nor any respect paid to those charms which alone could supersede every other consideration, and command unanimity when all other motives must fail. The glories of the right honourable gentleman were not confined to Westminster: they extended to that extreme corner of the island to which his partialities had not formerly been directed.

———— Via prima salutis,
Quod minime reris, graiâ pandetur ab urbe.

His success at Ross and Kirkwall ought not to be denied its share of praise; it was well entitled to "pur-sue the triumph and partake the gale†."

25th.
Mr. Fox's
petition.

Mr. Fox next presented a petition against the High Bailiff, praying that the House would immedi-

* 233 to 136, on the previous question.

† The Latin quotation is not in the Parliamentary History; it is taken from Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 356. The rest is verbatim, the same in both works.

ately order him to make a perfect and proper return to a committee under Mr. Grenville's act; but, after a considerable debate, it was conceded that the statute was not applicable. The petition was withdrawn, and a new one presented, reinforced by two others from electors, and it was met by one from Mr. Corbett, and one from other electors, praying that the scrutiny might proceed. All were ordered to be taken into consideration at the same time, and all parties, by themselves or their counsel, were to be heard at the bar.

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Other
petitions.

31st.

2nd June.

Counsel heard.

Mr. Douglas opened the case for Mr. Fox and his co-petitioners; and, when the evidence, merely formal, of Sir Bernard Turner, one of the Sheriffs, had been given, a summing up, of extraordinary eloquence, ability, and boldness, was made by Mr. Garrow, who, although recently called to the bar, and suddenly instructed for the discussion, gave certain proof of the extent of his talent, and a sure presage of the eminence to which he rapidly attained*. Mr. Mingay was then heard on the part of the High Bailiff, and a witness called to prove that, from the parishes of Saint Margaret and Saint John alone, four hundred names appeared on the poll as voters of Mr. Fox, not one of whom existed in either parish. This course of examination caused discussion and division; new objections were started, and new debates arose on questions relating to evidence, in which great heat was shewn and much personal reflection used. Several witnesses having at length been examined, Mr. Erskine, no longer a member, finally summed up the case on Mr. Fox's part. At

6th.

* This learned advocate had, at the time, only been six months called to the bar, and was very young. An early display in a criminal cause drew on him the attention of an alderman of London, a warm friend of Mr. Fox, by whose intervention he was retained for this scrutiny and petition; and his exertions proved eminently beneficial to his client. His speech, although he was suddenly called upon, was reckoned a masterpiece, and acquired the warm applause of Sir Lloyd Kenyon, who, whatever might be his political attachments, felt a generous sympathy for great talent in his own profession. It is hardly necessary to inform the present age that the most brilliant success attended Mr. Garrow at the Bar, where he attained the highest honours of that station. In 1817, he became one of the Barons of the Exchequer; and, on the bench of that court, completed a public life of nearly half a century. To the latest moment, he retained the same perspicacious sagacity, the same easy felicity of expression, and even with the same sweetness of voice and delicacy of enunciation which distinguished him in his earliest days. He died in honourable retirement, in September 1840.

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1784.

8th.

the next sitting, a long debate ensued, in which Mr. Fox vindicated his own cause, and exposed the conduct of the returning officer; but a motion of censure was lost by a majority of seventy-eight*.

It was then moved and carried, after a warm debate, that the High Bailiff should proceed in the scrutiny with all possible dispatch†.

State of
finances.

Finance imperiously required the ministers particular and early attention. Long delay, and the increasing demands arising from unadjusted claims created by the late war, occasioned unprecedented difficulties. The large amount of outstanding bills, issued during and in consequence of the war, seriously affected the public credit. They were at a discount from fifteen to twenty per cent. which had the effect of seriously distressing the funds‡. The minister, in presenting a budget, observed that this irksome portion of his duty was not created by himself, but the work of his predecessors. The arrears already ascertained and unfunded were fourteen millions in the navy and ordnance departments; and, as he found it impracticable, without affecting the price of the public securities, to fund the whole at once, he had restricted his borrowing to six millions six hundred thousand pounds; and, to meet the interest, he proposed taxes, which, as he calculated, would raise nine hundred thousand pounds a-year. The imposts, some new, and some increased, were on hats, ribbons and gauzes; coals; saddle and pleasure horses; printed linens and calicoes; candles; licences to deal in exciseable commodities; bricks and tiles; licences for shooting game; paper; and, lastly, hackney-coaches.

30th June.
The budget.

Bills debated.

Mr. Fox, reserving the right of objecting if necessary to the details, warmly approved of the principles and outline of the plan. The bills went through Parliament without any material opposition. To the duty on bricks and tiles, several members made objections, as an extension of the excise, a hardship on

22nd July.

* 195 to 117.

† 178 to 90.

‡ Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. p. 52.

those who had to build and repair, as an advantage to the brick-makers rather than to the public, and as unjust and unequal, while stone and slates were not included. In a debate on this tax, Sir Richard Hill proposed ten others as substitutes. The list comprised, with many other objects, Sunday tolls, and a tax on Sunday newspapers; on admissions to places of public amusement, cards, dice, printed music, visiting cards, wafers, black pins, and fans. These propositions were not favoured by the House, and the original bill passed; but several of the matters mentioned in the speech of the honourable Baronet were afterwards adopted as objects of taxation.

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1784.

The duty on
bricks
objected to.

Proposal of
Sir Richard
Hill.

The intended duty on coals, and that portion of the licences to dealers in exciseable commodities which would have affected hop-planters, being much objected to, were withdrawn; from which, and other causes, the Chancellor of the Exchequer found himself obliged to submit to the House a supplementary budget. This proposition included an additional tax on licences to sell ale and to kill game; on gold and silver plate; a duty of twenty shillings per hundred-weight on lead exported, and an addition to the postage of letters, with a limitation and regulation of the privilege of franking.

Supplemen-
tary budget.

23rd July.

An increased rate of postage was easily acceded to; but, had the privilege remained as it had been, the revenue would have acquired comparatively but little benefit. All that was necessary, up to this time, to send a letter free to any part of the kingdom, was the signature of a member of either House; and these franks were most profusely and inconsiderately distributed. Many persons were in possession of whole quires of them; besides which, letters were addressed to members, at places where they were not residing, so that, by an arrangement easily understood, the persons they were really meant for received them post free. The loss to government, by these means, has been stated at one hundred and seventy thousand pounds a-year. By the new regulation, no member of either House could frank a letter, unless, together with his name, he

Privilege of
franking let-
ters restrained.

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1784.

Extent of
Smuggling.

wrote that of the post-town from which it was to be sent, the day of the month, and year, and the whole direction; and no member was to permit letters to be directed to him at any place except that of his actual abode. These restrictions formed the beginning of a system which was carried to a great extent, and rendered that, which had produced a very small revenue, one of the most copious sources of fiscal emolument.

A measure calculated at once to improve the revenue, to obstruct the operation of the contraband trader, and to favour the prosperity of the East India Company, was brought before Parliament, under the name of the Commutation Act. The practice of smuggling had grown to an alarming height; not carried on in small boats stealing along shore, or fearfully venturing to cross the channel, but in vessels of great size and strength, capable of conveying ample freights, and armed for resistance in case of attack. Tea, being highly taxed, easily conveyed in bulk, separable into small parcels, and of certain sale, was a favourite object of illicit speculation. Ships, it was said, belonging to opulent individuals were freighted in China, came to Europe under foreign colours; and, whenever opportunities could be found, the cargoes were smuggled into England. In this manner it was calculated that two-thirds of the whole quantity consumed were obtained. The infallible and easy remedy for such an evil was the reduction, almost to extinction, of the duty; but, as the revenue was not in a state to bear such a defalcation, an increased tax on houses and windows was contemplated as an indemnity.

31st June.
Commutation
Act.

Mr. Pitt proposed this plan to the House in a clear and able speech; and, after a few observations from Mr. Eden, the resolutions were voted. No important debate took place; and only one division is recorded, in which the minister had a very great majority*.

10th August.
18th. Passes
the Lords.

In the upper House, the bill was attacked in its

principle and all its provisions by Lord Loughborough, and most ably and triumphantly defended by the Lord Chancellor. It passed without a division*.

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1784.

Another measure for the prevention of smuggling, was the statute since known by the name of the Hovering Act, which imposes forfeiture and severe penalties on the owners of vessels approaching within four leagues of the coast, having on board any spirituous liquors in casks of less than sixty gallons, or tea or coffee, except in certain moderate quantities, or any goods liable to forfeiture on importation†.

Hovering Act.

The East India Company, sagaciously pursuing their own interest, while they forwarded the views of Government, purchased all the cargoes of tea that could be obtained in any part of Europe; and thus, while they enabled themselves to meet every possible demand, they removed the present means of contraband supply, while the new laws destroyed all encouragement to fresh importation‡.

Purchases of
tea by the East
India Com-
pany.

An arrear in the civil list, which had already been mentioned to Parliament by Mr. Pitt§, was more formally communicated by a message from the King; and a supply of sixty thousand pounds was granted, after very slight debates.

Arrear of the
civil list.

July 21st, 23rd.

The affairs of the East India Company occupied, as might be expected, considerable attention.

Affairs of the
East India
Company.

On the rejection of Mr. Pitt's bill by the late Parliament, Mr. Eden had obtained a resolution that the

23rd Jan.
Committee.

* On this subject generally, see Sinclair's History of the Revenue, vol. ii. p. 386. Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 49.

† For more particular details, see Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 49.

‡ Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 51. In the following winter, Mr. Pitt was enabled to strike a severe and effectual blow against the smugglers at Deal, one of their most important stations. The severity of the weather having obliged them to draw their boats, which were of a size and description forbidden by a recent statute, high up on the beach, the minister, not without some difficulty, procured the march of a regiment of infantry to the place. Their presence was unexpected, and so little welcome, that the publicans took down their signs that they might not be quartered on them; the neighbouring people were with difficulty prevailed on to sell them provisions; and the owner of a large barn would not allow them to take shelter in it unless he were paid two years' rent. It was supposed, because some government vessels hovered off the shore, that they were to embark for foreign service; but the day after their arrival, they were drawn out, and executed their task by burning all the boats; the inhabitants being thoroughly surprised, and not daring to offer any resistance.

§ 30th June. See Parliamentary History, vol. xxiv. p. 1020.

CHAP. LVII.	Directors should lay before the House their opinions, with accounts and estimates respecting Parliamentary interference in the acceptance of bills. A report, which was accordingly presented, was referred to a select committee of fifteen, of whom Mr. Eden was appointed chairman; but their proceedings were terminated by the dissolution. Early in the sitting of the new House, the Company by petition represented, as the causes of their present embarrassments, their losses during the war of two millions and a half, and the expenses of their conflicts in India; but asserted their full ability to pay every demand, if a necessary respite were allowed; and presented an additional report, containing information recently obtained: both reports were referred to a select committee, composed of the persons nominated by the last Parliament, except four, three of whom were no longer members, and the other declined acting*.
1784. 16th Feb.	Mr. Eden brought up their report; the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who had previously, and without much opposition, obtained an act enabling the Company to pay a dividend, at the rate of eight per cent. on the midsummer half-year, moved for leave to bring in a bill for their further relief, according to the prayer of their petition. In the few observations with which he prefaced his motion, he said that the rise or downfall of the Company's affairs was an object intimately connected with the vigour or decline of the British constitution; and every effort to extricate them from difficulties was a step toward national independence. The relief required was, first, in their debt to the public, from the accumulation of duties; forbearance on this point would be just and not difficult. As to the bills drawn from India, some were accepted, some not; and of others, only notice had been received. On this doubtful and delicate question, he wished to act with extreme caution, governing himself by the wisdom of the House. The third point was the divi-
11th March.	
26th May. Petition of the Company.	
1st June. Committee renewed.	
22nd June. Report.	
29th.	
2nd July. Mr. Pitt moves to bring in a bill for tempo- rary relief.	

* These particulars will not be found in the Parliamentary History, but in the Journals of the House of Commons, at the respective days; and in Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. i. p. 377.

dend to be paid, which might be so regulated that the Company might act on a certain basis, without making renewed applications for authority.

Mr. Francis insisted that, by passing the proposed bill, the public would be bound, in honour at least, if not legally, to pay the amount of the acceptances, if the Company should be unable to discharge them. Reviewing, in detail, the acts and circumstances of the Company, he drew from them very unfavourable pre-sages. As he had said many things disadvantageous to Mr. Hastings, he thought it necessary to declare that he retained not a spark of animosity against him; they were both of temper too warm to be capable of lasting resentments. Mr. Hastings, although personally absent, was present by his representatives, men of ability and distinguished activity, whom it would not be an act of consummate prudence to provoke.

These observations drew forth an able and argumentative answer from Colonel Cathcart, who, while he disclaimed the honour of being Mr. Hastings's representative, pronounced an animated eulogy on his administration, and on those superior and uncommon abilities which he had exerted with so much zeal and rigid integrity in the service of his country. He also took an exact view of the military powers of India, predicting the highest benefits from the measures of Mr. Hastings.

Major Scott, equally disclaiming the character of Mr. Hastings's representative, denied many of the propositions advanced by Mr. Francis.

Lord North, Mr. Fox, and many other members, spoke in the debate; Mr. Pitt expressed his obligation to Colonel Cathcart for information by which he should profit; and, at length, Mr. Dundas, reverting to the original grounds of the question, shewed the propriety of affording relief to the Company. He also reviewed the conduct of Mr. Hastings, not vindicating it in every particular, but, upon the whole, ascribing the preservation of India to his prompt and energetic resolutions, while the other members of the Supreme Council shrunk back in despair; and giving him the

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Observations
of Mr. Francis.

Of Colonel
Cathcart.

Major Scott.

Other mem-
bers.

Mr. Dundas.

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Progress of the
bill.

4th August.

Mr. Pitt's
India bill.

credit of having, on many critical occasions, supported all the presidencies by a ready and liberal relief.

The motion was unanimously adopted; the Company were allowed a longer time to pay their arrears of duties, and to make a dividend of eight per cent.; and the bill passed, unimpeded by any vigorous exertion to obstruct it. In the upper House, there was neither division nor protest.

In moving to bring in a new bill for the better government of our possessions in India, Mr. Pitt expatiated on the importance of the measure, which involved the prosperity and strength of this country, the happiness of the natives of our territories in India, and, finally, the constitution of England itself. He spoke with horror of the bill which had passed the House last year, and descanted on its pernicious effects. In the arrangements he should propose, power must be confided to some body of men; but it would be vested where it would best produce its intended effects, and be least liable to abuse. Although no charter could, or ought to, supersede state necessity, still nothing but absolute necessity could justify a departure from charters. The affairs of the Company were not in a state that called for a present revocation of theirs; nor did there any longer exist a danger of the best and most sacred rights of Englishmen being made a sacrifice to ambitious projects. Under any possible form of government, great inconvenience must arise from the distance of the dependency, which must prevent the government at home, and those who filled the executive offices in India, from acting with equal views. To encourage commerce and secure the happiness of India, the government there must have a certain degree of power, subject only to the control of a Board at home. This control should remain in the executive government; the management of commerce, with the Company: the patronage should be in India; it would be free from corruption, and, under due restrictions and limitations, attended with no bad consequences. He should propose the appointment of a separate department, of a Board of Control, to whom

all dispatches should be transmitted, and who should be responsible for what they did, or omitted. The Board was not to be irremoveably filled; nor would the Company's Directors be excluded from seeing the papers of the Commissioners; but their decision must be final and binding: they might revise, correct, alter, or control the measures of the Company; but those originated by them the Company were only to carry into execution.

The supreme government abroad was to be seated in Bengal; to have an effectual control over every other presidency, with executive power, and the disposal of offices, subject however, in all things, to the Board of Control. The Directors were to nominate the officers of the supreme government at Bengal, and of the subordinate governments, subject to the negative of the King; but the Commander-in-chief must be appointed solely by the Crown.

In India, the first and principal objects would be, to exclude the views of ambition and conquest; a pacific system should be departed from only on grounds of self-defence. To guard against the continuance of rapacity, plunder, and extortion, he proposed to subject the Company's servants to a strict responsibility, and to declare it illegal to accept, on any pretence, money or other valuables, from the natives. For such offences adequate punishments would be provided; delinquents should be tried by a summary proceeding, which he did not define, but gave an idea that it would be an exception to the general regulations of the law. Judges were to be constituted under special commission, not bound by strict rules of evidence, but to give judgments conscientiously, such as the common law would warrant, if sustained by admissible evidence. This tribunal should be elected by ballot from among the judges, and from both Houses of Parliament, and decide on questions both of law and fact. They should be empowered to examine the amount of any man's property on his arrival in England; and the Company should not again employ any

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Mr. Fox.

servant convicted of any misdemeanor; nor should any person be suffered to return to that country after his stay in this beyond a certain limited period.

Mr. Fox, notwithstanding the allusions which had been made, would not, at that time, enter into a justification of his own measure. He presumed three bills were to be brought in; one for the government of India, a second for the security of the natives, and a third for the punishment of delinquents. To the last two he foresaw but little objection; but to the first he should give all possible opposition.

Mr. Pitt declaring that he intended to comprise his whole measure in one bill, Mr. Fox regretted that he should then be obliged, in opposing the principle of the bill on the second reading, to resist some regulations to which he had no objection.

16th.
Committee
moved.

Mr. Francis.

On the motion that the House should resolve itself into a committee, Mr. Francis opened the debate. He began with an observation, that duty might survive hope; and that he feared both the House and he were taking unnecessary pains, and endeavouring to make a law of regulation, when the object of the law was lost. The bill, as it stood, had no foundation whatever, but was a conclusion without premises. It stated itself to be remedial, and yet was silent as to the facts and persons which made such a bill necessary. On the principles of almost every clause, the Directors ought to be annihilated; whereas they were left in existence, but in a state not greatly to be envied. Poor gentlemen! they were suffered to remain nominally, but were reduced to mere clerks; the shadow of the direction left, without the substance! There was no preamble; the bill being a conclusion without premises, a remedy without a disorder, and a punishment without a crime. In this tone and manner he reviewed many of the clauses, interspersing his observations with censures on the principles and conduct of Mr. Hastings, and condemning all the enactments. To this trifling objection, Mr. Pitt answered that there was no reason why there should be a preamble stuffed with recitals, or

comprising a history of all the abuses that had prevailed in India for twenty years past, or a catalogue of the names of those who had committed them.

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Mr. Fox

Mr. Fox, in a masterly speech, declared his dissent from the bill in all its parts, not excepting that which related to regulation and judicature, which, until it was printed, he had been inclined to admit. He could never consent to the institution of the sort of tribunal stated in the bill, without an abandonment of every principle on which he had been taught to approve of the criminal judicature of England. The present bill was as much a violation of the Company's charter as his own had been; the Chancellor of the Exchequer had relinquished his former opinions, and produced a measure calculated to perpetuate abuses, and to put the conclusive seal to the miserable state of that country. It increased the power and gave additional temptations, with additional means of impunity to the chief governor; it childishly disjoined the patronage from the government; and, by taking the power of appointing officers from the Company, completely annihilated them. He discussed at length the superiority of his abominable bill, and that now produced; declaring that he then was, and ever should be, ready to appeal from the public to the public, not doubting but that, however they were deluded by the nonsense of epithets for a time, they would form a true judgment at last. In many particulars he drew a comparison between the two bills, describing that before the House as calculated to perpetuate weakness by dividing power; it should be left entire with the Directors, or taken entirely away. "My bill," he said, "was charged with erecting a fourth estate in the legislature. It did not erect any estate which did not exist at the time; the Court of Directors was the fourth estate, and my bill only changed its nature from an estate without efficiency to one which promised to have it; from one which, by its quality, was liable to much delusion, to one which, being incessantly under the eye and inspection of Parliament, was less liable to imposition or misconduct; from one not controllable, to

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“one constantly under check, and removable on an address from either House.” He summed up his objections to the first part of the bill in these energetic terms:—“It provides for a weak government at home by the division of power; and it perpetuates the abuses in India, by giving additional authority to the officers abroad. It is unstatesman-like in its principles; for it absurdly gives the power of originating measures to one Board, and the nominating officers for the execution of them to another. It increases influence without vesting responsibility; and it operates by dark intrigue, rather than by avowed authority.”

To the other parts of the bill, Mr. Fox expressed his objections strongly, but less in detail.

Mr. Dundas.

The measure was ably vindicated by Mr. Dundas, who said that the principles and ultimate ends of the two bills were very opposite. The one boasted that it took no power from the Crown, nor gave any to the legislative branch of government; while it was at that very moment annihilating every particle of power which properly belonged to the Crown, or to the executive branch of the legislature, and also robbing a great and respectable body of men of invaluable rights. The other was intended to lodge a principal share of the executive power on the territorial laws of India in that department of government in which it ought by right to be vested; and it shewed every degree of tenderness to the chartered rights and privileges of the Company; it was, in fine, one which he doubted not would produce that happy and desirable mixed government, which every friend to the immunities of a wealthy people would cheerfully welcome and maintain. Although the present bill gave new powers to government, yet they were so circumscribed that they could not, in the hands of even the most abandoned prince, be converted into instruments of mischief or oppression; but, by Mr. Fox's bill, there was to have been no distribution of patronage: his Board of Commissioners were to possess all, fully and indisputably; every appointment was to proceed from them; every

individual dependent on the Company was compelled to stoop to them: they were to be princes at home, and sovereign umpires abroad. At the same time he confessed that the bill under discussion did not exhibit a complete and unexceptionable view of what it would be proper to do with regard to India. It contained the great leading features only of a system which might be susceptible of much improvement.

The division, on the question that the Speaker do leave the chair, gave the minister a majority exceeding four to one*.

In one part of this debate, Mr. Francis imputed to Lord Thurlow the expression, in the House of Lords, of a wish "that General Clavering, Colonel Monson, and himself, had been drowned in their passage to India." Mr. Fox reprobated the use of this language, and said that the noble Lord had added that he made the wish "because he could spare them out of the world." Lord North, with characteristic urbanity and good feeling, apologized for the use of a harsh expression in the heat of debate: the Lord Chancellor was free from the suspicion of any inhuman intention, and such words ought not to be considered seriously. Lord North followed this course in justice to his own sentiments, without affronting his party by a direct contradiction; but Mr. Pitt took upon himself to assert that the expressions referred to were not correctly attributed to the learned Lord*.

In the committee, several amendments were made; some clauses withdrawn, some substituted, and some modified. The debates were conducted with great spirit and vigour; but no division took place.

In the House of Lords, the bill was passed without any amendment. It was discussed with no less zeal than in the lower House; but there was no division;

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Expression im-
puted to Lord
Thurlow.

Lord North.

Mr. Pitt.

In the
committee.

House of
Lords.
29th July to
9th August.

* 271 to 60.

† The debates, as reported, do not contain any such expression. The words nearest to it fell from Lord Thurlow, on the 12th of December: he then said, "when the government of this country sent three men to thwart and oppose all Mr. Hastings's measures, he desired either to be recalled or confirmed. Would to God these men had never arrived there." See Parliamentary History, vol. xxiv. p. 129.

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Substance of
the act.

and a protest, in which the principle of the Bill was censured, as false, unjust, and unconstitutional, received the signature of five peers only.

By this important statute, it was enacted that his Majesty should appoint one of the secretaries of state, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and four other members of the Privy Council, to be commissioners, during pleasure, for the affairs of India, and that they should have the superintendence and control over the civil and military government, and the revenues of the territorial possessions, and over the affairs of the Company, who, as subjected to their government and direction, should be obliged to submit to their consideration all their minutes and accounts, and, also, all their letters and dispatches, which the commissioners were to return in fourteen days, with their approbation, or, in case of disapprobation, with the reasons, under their hands; and the Directors were to forward them, if amended. Should the Directors neglect to lay their dispatches before them, the Commissioners were empowered to prepare orders or instructions, which the Directors must put in force; but, if aggrieved, the Directors might appeal to the King in council, whose decision should be final. The commissioners were not to appoint any servants of the Company. The Supreme Council at Calcutta, on the death or resignation of the present members, was fixed at three, among whom the Commander-in-chief of the forces was to rank next to the Governor-general. Madras and Bombay were to have each a Governor or President, with a Council, similarly constituted, and all persons holding civil or military employment were removable by the King or the Directors. Minute regulations were enacted for filling up offices civil and military. The Court of Proprietors could no longer reverse the orders or resolutions of the Directors; and the Governor-general and his Council had power to control the other presidencies in matters of war or peace. All were restrained from commencing hostilities, or entering into warlike treaties, unless attacked or endangered. The

debts of the Nabob of Arcot were to be inquired into by the Directors; who were also to adjust the disputed claims between him and the Rajah of Tanjore. The number and age of cadets and writers were limited. All British subjects were declared amenable to the law, in India or Great Britain, for crimes or offences; they who should receive presents were declared guilty of extortion; and the Company were forbidden to release or compound for debts or penalties, or to restore persons removed from offices by the sentence of a court. All persons arriving from India, after the commencement of the year 1787, were to deliver into the Court of Exchequer an inventory of their whole property; and any person proved to have concealed to the amount of two thousand pounds, incurred the forfeiture of all he possessed. No person, having returned from India and resided five years in Europe, could again act in the Company's service, unless detained by sickness, or unless appointed by the Court of Directors and three-fourths of a general Court of Proprietors. Persons holding offices under the King or the Company in India, charged with extortion or other misdemeanors, were to be tried by a court constituted in a novel and very extraordinary manner. A supposed delinquent was to stand accused upon an information, exhibited in the Court of King's Bench. In every session of Parliament, within thirty days of its commencement, twenty-six or more peers, and forty or more members of the House of Commons, were to be chosen by ballot, and, whenever a commission should issue for trial of an offender, one judge out of each of the three superior Courts at Westminster, was to be added to the number. The judges were then to sit, and the names of the peers and commoners being put into separate boxes, were to be drawn out; the party accused might peremptorily challenge thirteen peers and twenty commons; the Attorney-general, or other prosecutor, shewing such cause as should be allowed by the judges, might challenge any number, until four peers and six commons, free from all exception, should have been drawn. The court, so constituted, was to

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have the power to hear and determine, and to pronounce judgment, such as by common law might be awarded in cases of conviction for extortion and other misdemeanors, and to declare the party convicted incapable of again serving the Company in any capacity; and their judgment was to be final. They had power to send for persons, papers, and records; to commit to the Fleet, persons whom they should consider guilty of prevarication, and to receive as evidence depositions transmitted from India. A person found guilty before the court, and sentenced to a fine, was to disclose, upon interrogatories in the Court of Exchequer, an account of his estate and effects, to the amount of such fine; and on his refusal to answer, to forfeit all his estate, real and personal, to the Crown*.

Observations.

It must be recollected that some act was called for, by the existing complaints against the East India Company and their government abroad, and by their avowed want of authority and pecuniary difficulties at home. They must have felt that it was necessary; for they did not exhibit a petition against it in either House of Parliament; nor did any public body, or any individual in the kingdom, raise his voice in an appeal to the legislature. Whatever, therefore, may be thought of some of its regulations in the abstract, the expediency of making them seems, at the time, to have been conceded by all.

Motions
against Sir
Elijah Impey,

7th and 30th
July.

and Mr.
Hastings.

Restoration of
forfeited
estates in
Scotland.

Delinquencies, supposed to have been committed in India, also occupied the attention of Parliament. Motions were made respecting Sir Elijah Impey; and Mr. Burke moved for some papers relating to the conduct of Mr. Hastings toward Almas Ali Cawn, a native, and some other papers; some were granted; but, on the demand of more, the House passed to the order of the day.

This busy session was closed by an act of national benevolence, calculated to produce great effect in conciliating the affections, appeasing the feelings, and soothing the laudable national pride of the people of

* See the statute 24th Geo. IV. sess. 2, c. 25. Also Macpherson's *Annals*, vol. iv. p. 45.

Scotland. Forty years had elapsed since the sword of rebellion had been drawn in that country: the cause of quarrel existed no longer; the exasperated mind had found leisure to cool; all sentiments of ill-will, founded on rival claims to the sovereignty, had subsided, and even if opinions were, by a few persons, cherished adverse to the title of the reigning family, they evaporated in petulant expressions, while the body of the people, truly loyal and attached, supported the honour of the throne, and promoted the real interests of the nation. But, while all animosity appeared to be thus extinguished, the heads of certain noble and honourable families languished under the inconveniences, and smarted under the reproach, attendant upon the forfeiture of their patrimonial estates, to which nothing but the liberality of Parliament could restore them; for, by several acts passed in the late reign, and while the memory of recent injuries was fresh and lively, the lands of the principal rebels were taken from them, and all grants of them by the King or his successors were declared null and void*.

Mr. Dundas introduced the measure, with an apology for bringing it forward at such an advanced period of the session. He did not impugn the principle on which forfeiture was inflicted, or the policy of the measure, but merely submitted, that the loyalty and good disposition since evinced by the people of the Highlands intitled their chiefs to a favourable consideration. He took no merit to himself for originating the plan: Lord Chatham had justly made it his boast that he had found in Scotland a hardy race of men, able to do their country service, but labouring under a proscription; he had called them to her aid, and their valour and fidelity had not disappointed his expectations. It was an auspicious omen, Mr. Dundas said, that the first blow having been given to this proscription by the Earl of Chatham, might well justify a hope that the remains of such a system would be completely annihilated under the administration of his son. But the praise of liberality must not be confined

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2nd August.
Moved by
Mr. Dundas.

* See 20th Geo. II. c. 41 and c. 50, and c. 51; but more particularly 25th Geo. II. c. 41.

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to Mr. Pitt: he knew, from frequent conferences with Lord North, during his administration, that he had been always disposed to act, in the business, on the most generous and manly principles; and if no such measure as the present had been proposed while he was in office, it must be ascribed to the intervention of numerous untoward circumstances, for which his lordship was not answerable. The last administration, too, had they continued in power, would, he was assured, have brought forward such a measure as the present. He proposed that these estates, on being restored, should belong to those heirs, whether male or female, to whom they would have gone in a regular and legal course of descent if no act of rebellion had been committed by their ancestors; but he did not mean that they should receive their lands in better condition than they would have had them if no forfeiture had taken place; for that would be giving a premium for rebellion; he proposed, therefore, that they should have them, subject to the incumbrances with which they were loaded when they fell into the hands of government; and the money that should thus accrue to the public, should be employed in objects of great national importance. He mentioned, with approbation, the expense already incurred by the trustees who had managed the revenue derived from these estates, in providing a proper building for the records of Scotland: this work he proposed to complete. Another portion was to be expended in rewards and indemnities to the officers employed by the present trustees; but chiefly, the money should be laid out in completing the navigation or canal which was to join the Firth of Forth with the Firth of Clyde, which would run from sea to sea. He described the utility and importance of this work, and shewed that, even in a financial point of view, the country would derive benefit from this application of the public money, while he had reason to hope for great political advantages from the whole transaction*.

* Many publications contain descriptions and calculations on this canal. See *Beauties of Scotland*, vol. v. p. 275; and *Lockhart's Life of Sir Walter Scott*, vol. iii. p. 255, where some of its disadvantages are detailed.

The right honourable mover did no more than justice to the opposition members, in supposing they would not thwart his measure. Mr. Fox spoke of it in terms of great admiration, wishing only that it might soon be found expedient to shew the same indulgence to England, and alluded particularly to the case of the Earl of Derwentwater, whose claims were stronger than those of the Scotch lords, as seventy years had elapsed since the time of his family estates being confiscated. Mr. Pitt did not pledge himself to adopt the recommendation; but the bill went through the House, not only without a division, but without an adverse comment.

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Supported by
the opposition
members.

In the Lords it did not pass so placidly; the opposition to it was confined to one very forcible speech; but that appears to have been entirely unexpected. On the motion for the second reading, the Lord Chancellor complained that he had no knowledge that such a measure was intended, until the bill was brought in. It ought regularly to have been announced by a message from his Majesty, which would have disclosed the grounds on which he was willing to relax the severity of the law. His Lordship then made a very able comment on the acts of the last reign, which, by the present bill, were to be annulled. He did not deny the loyalty, attachment, and services of people of the Highlands; but these characteristics were not reasons for granting particular favours; they were common to all the King's subjects. It was too much to admit for true, merely because it was asserted, that the deprived families had rendered services to the state; the fact ought to be proved. His Lordship then animadverted on several of the clauses for restoring estates to particular families, and censured the omission of compulsory enactments for payment of the moneys which had been charged on them, and would, on restitution, be due to government. If it were proper to restore the lands forfeited by the last rebellion, it was not less so to give up those which had been in like manner lost in seventeen hundred and fifteen. It had ever been the prevailing and settled maxim of the

16th August.
Opposed by
Lord Thurlow.

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British constitution, that treason was a crime which went so directly to the foundation of the government, that nothing was adequate in punishment, but the total eradication of the person, his name and family, out of that society which he had attempted to endanger and wound to the heart. *Fuit hæc sapientia quondam!* That was the wisdom of former times; that was the rule of policy laid down, and invariably adopted. He also expressed disapprobation of the manner in which the money to be refunded by the restored landholders was to be applied, denying that the objects could be considered as public; and, in this part of the argument, shewed an exact knowledge, in all particulars, of the proposed canal. But he desired that what he had said might be considered as his thoughts, and not as his objections: should the bill go into a committee, he would absent himself from the House and give no further trouble.

Passed.

As this speech was not followed by any motion, a few explanations only were offered by the Earl of Dunmore and Lord Sydney, and the bill passed without delay.

18th.

Prorogation.
20th.

Two days afterwards, the King prorogued Parliament, expressing a hope that, after so laborious a session, it would not be found necessary to convoke them again at a very early period.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-EIGHTH.

1783—1785.

State of Ireland.—Volunteers.—Temporary tranquillity.—Institution of the Order of St. Patrick.—Colony from Geneva projected—fails.—New Lord Lieutenant.—General election. Pretensions of the volunteers.—Delegates.—Meeting at Lisburne.—Efforts in England for a reform of Parliament. Plans of Mr. Wyvill—Lord Effingham—the Duke of Richmond—and others.—Resolutions of the Delegates—the elections peaceably conducted.—Proceedings in the new Parliament.—Ill-humour of party.—Altercation between Mr. Flood and Mr. Grattan.—National convention. Mr. Flood's motion for reform.—Observations of the Attorney-general—motion lost.—Resolution of the House.—Motion on public expenditure.—The Duke of Rutland Lord Lieutenant.—Considerations on the volunteers.—Efforts of the Catholics.—Mr. Flood again moves for reform.—Bill brought in—and rejected.—Violence of the mob.—Newspapers.—Bill for regulating them.—Seditious societies formed—their cruelties.—The Lord Lieutenant insulted. Congress proposed.—Laudable conduct of the Catholics. Letter of Dr. Troy—Distress of the manufacturers.—Motions in Parliament.—Complaints investigated in England. Arrangement proposed—submitted to the Irish Parliament. Resolutions moved by Mr. Orde—adopted.—Trade of Ireland mentioned in the King's speech—Pitt gives notice of motion.—Committee formed—alarm created—petitions.—Mr. Pitt's propositions.—Debated—first proposition carried—the others debated and agreed to.—Debate on the report. Propositions finally carried.—Debated in the House of Lords. Address to the King voted.—Draft of a bill sent to Ireland.

Opposition prepared — displayed in Parliament — violent speeches.—Mr. Orde moves to bring in the bill.—Speech of Mr. Grattan.—Small majority for government.—The measure abandoned—rejoicings.—Mr. Flood's motion—resignation of the Speaker—succeeded by Mr. Foster.—Address to the Lord Lieutenant.—Session of the English Parliament. Debate on the address.—Westminster scrutiny.—Counsel refuse to address the House.—Motion.—Growing distaste to the inquiry—its termination.—Mr. Fox's motion.—Bill for regulations of polls and scrutinies.—Mr. Fox recovers damages from the High Bailiff (n).—Mr. Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform—efforts to create a feeling in the public.—Mr. Pitt's speech.—Mr. Powys's.—Lord North. Mr. Fox.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Bankes.—Motion rejected. Observations.—Measures of finance.—Mr. Pitt's motion for regulation of public offices.—Bills passed.—Taxes.—End of the session.

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LVIII.

1783.
State of
Ireland.

MUCH were they deceived who expected that the concessions made by the Rockingham administration would give content to the people of Ireland, or create perfect amity and mutual confidence. It could not be overlooked by the Irish that the boon they received was wrenched from the enfeebled hand of Great Britain by the influence of an armed body of volunteers, strongly imbued with the spirit of reform and resistance. The delegates who assembled at Dungannon represented about one hundred thousand armed men, and spoke with an assurance of support from them, when they declared their right to debate and pass resolutions, and the absolute independence of their legislature on that of Great Britain.

1782.
Volunteers.

The year in which peace was established presented, in its early months, no topics for hostile or acrimonious discussion. On the dismissal of Lord Shelburne's administration, the Corporation of Dublin, in an affectionate address to Lord Temple, the Lord Lieutenant, who was about to retire, treated the present position of their country as in the highest degree satisfactory.

1783.
Temporary
tranquillity.

March 7th.

“ All nations,” they said, “ have experienced a period of exaltation as well as of depression. From an ill-judging policy, this kingdom has felt the latter ; from the well-timed and liberal sentiments which prevail, it is likely to attain the former*.”

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The national pride was soothed by the formation of a new Order, named, after the tutelar protector of the country, Knights of the most illustrious Order of St. Patrick. Of these, the King was always to be sovereign, and the Lord Lieutenant for the time being Grand Master ; and, except two princes of the blood, the knights companions were of the highest rank and best families in Ireland ; their Chancellor, the Archbishop of Dublin, and the Dean of Saint Patrick their Secretary. They were privately invested at the Castle, before the Lord Lieutenant ; but their installation was performed, with great solemnity and splendour, on the day devoted to their patron-saint†.

Order of St.
Patrick.

11th.

17th.

Another subject, not without interest to the Irish nation, although of small importance in the general view of history, engaged its share of attention during the summer. In consequence of disagreements in the state of Geneva, a number of citizens determined to quit their native land, and deputed commissioners to open a negotiation for their establishment in Ireland, as a colony. Great hopes were entertained of advantages to be derived from the accession of this body of Protestant republicans to our dominion ; and it was proposed to advance fifty thousand pounds, and to assign them, as a territory, a tract of crown land in the county of Waterford, near the confluence of the rivers on Barrow and Sair, then called Passage ; but if the colony were established, it was to receive the name of New Geneva. Little progress was made in the negotiation ; for the emigrants having insisted on being represented in Parliament, and, at the same time, governed by their own laws, their proposal was deemed

April.
Colony from
Geneva pro-
jected.

The scheme
fails.

* See Annual Register, vol. xxvi. p. 354.

† Seward's Collectanea Politica, vol. i. p. 323 ; Gordon's History of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 286 ; and almost all the periodical works of the time.

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New Lord
Lieutenant.

June 3rd.

General
election.Pretensions of
the volunteers.

Delegates.

July 1st.
Meeting at
Lisburne.Efforts of the
Reformers in
England.Plan of Mr.
Wyvill.

inadmissible. A few individuals attempted to settle, but soon abandoned their enterprise*.

Lord Northington was the successor of Earl Temple. A dissolution of Parliament was shortly to take place, and the ferment of politics was even more violent in Ireland than in England. The volunteers, now an active and uncontrolled deliberative body in the state, assumed the power of publishing decisive opinions on many high and important subjects, and principally Parliamentary reform, declaring that it would be disgraceful to lay down their arms while with them they could hope to assure any benefit to their country. To themselves, and not to the legislature, they attributed the late concessions of the British government, and now, following the example of the reformers in Yorkshire, they deputed delegates, formed committees, and entered into correspondence with persons in England most conspicuous for their endeavours to alter the constitution of Parliament. The delegates from forty-five companies of the province of Ulster assembled at Lisburne; Colonel Sharman was their president; and they resolved that a general meeting of volunteer delegates should be held at Dungannon on the subject of a more equal representation of the people†.

If these measures of the volunteers appear bold and striking, they were amply supported by the Reformers in England. Beside the avowed public resolutions of meetings held in the county of York, the city of London, and other places, individuals of known activity and influence entered into communication with them. Some differences existed in their practical opinions; but they all wrote in terms calculated to inspire confidence in the volunteers. The Reverend Christopher Wyvill, chairman of the Committee of Association in Yorkshire, and a most active promoter of the cause of Reform, in answer to questions submitted to him, deprecated universal suffrage, but recommended an extension of the right of voting to all who

* Seward's Collectanea, vol. i. p. 328. Gordon, vol. ii, p. 286.

† Plowden's History of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 27.

were endowed with some small portion of property ; to all who paid taxes, to all copyholders and leaseholders for terms exceeding thirty years, of a yearly value of forty shillings, Catholics not excepted ; but he would not allow persons of that religion to be members of the lower House. The disfranchisement of small boroughs, the transfer of their members to counties, the capital, and the great towns which had not hitherto sent representatives ; adding to these such a number of members as should give them a preponderance in legislation ; and a restriction of the duration of Parliaments to one, or, at the utmost, three years. He also recommended a general assembly of delegates from every part of Ireland : by such a meeting the union of volunteers might be preserved ; their applications would be presented to Parliament with the weight and authority of the collective body, and the requisitions must be complied with. Lord Effingham advised that the boroughs should be divided into four classes, each class to return from four to ten burgesses ; all persons paying scot and lot to be voters ; the polls to be taken on a certain day in every parish, before the parish officers, witnessed by the constable, and by him transmitted to the sheriff, who, from these documents, was to return the members. The Parliament to be triennial, at the most ; but it were more eligible that it should have no fixed duration beyond the session. There was, he said, no argument in favour of seven years which would not equally apply to seventeen. The Duke of Richmond, whose opinion was, for many years afterward, the theme of daring innovators, laid down, as the result of many years' consideration and of every day's experience, that the restoration of the right of voting universally to every man, not incapacitated by nature for want of reason, or by law for the commission of crime ; together with annual elections ; was the only reform that could be effectual and permanent, the only reform that was practicable. His Grace recommended the extension of the right of suffrage to Catholics ; and protested against voting by ballot. To these were added missives from Dr. Jebb, Dr. Price,

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Of Lord
Effingham.

Of the Duke
of Richmond.

Other
opinions.

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Resolutions of
the delegates.

Major Cartwright, and some others, beside anonymous writers, urging the necessity of reform, and indicating to the volunteers their power of obtaining it by compulsion, if not granted by concession; all agreeing in some points, but varying in others*.

The delegates were not less fervid in their resolutions and declarations; and, while they insisted on freedom as their indefeasible birth-right, they censured, in all its parts, the composition of the lower House of Parliament, forming a body independent of the people; tendering majorities to every administration, while its imperfections, as a representative assembly, and its length of duration, were unconstitutional and intolerable grievances. Nor did they omit making ample acknowledgments to their friends in England†.

35th July.
The elections
peaceably con-
ducted.

During the sittings of the delegates, Parliament was dissolved; and, whatever might have been expected or desired by some parties, the elections were conducted without disorder, and produced no remarkable occurrence.

4th October.
Proceedings in
the Irish Par-
liament.

On the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Pery was chosen Speaker, and an address agreed to without a division; when, on the motion of Lord Dudley, thanks were voted to the volunteers "for their spirited endeavours to provide for the protection of their country, and their ready and frequent assistance of the civil magistrates in enforcing the due execution of the laws." This motion appears to have been framed for the purpose of preventing any violent declaration of opinion respecting their proceedings; but it could not be expected, in the prevailing state of the public mind, to quell the disposition to angry debate.

15th.
Ill-humour of
party.

A portion of ill-humour was shown on the following day, when a motion for a complimentary address to Lord Temple was opposed by Mr. Adderley, on the ground that the retiring Viceroy was too partial to the

* See a Collection of the Letters addressed to the Volunteers of Ireland, published by Stockdale, 1783; Letter of the Duke of Richmond, by the same publisher, 1783; and Political Papers by the Reverend Christopher Wyvill, vol. iii. p. 46.

† Plowden, vol. i. p. 28 et seqq.

Roman Catholics. A few days afterward, the ill-temper of party broke out in a more conspicuous manner. In a debate on a motion of Sir Henry Cavendish, on economical retrenchment, Mr. Flood and Mr. Grattan let loose upon each other a torrent of vituperative declamation. To repeat their gross personalities could only be of use if it were necessary to prove, by a striking example, that men, who, by education, talents, and eminent repute, ought, themselves, to serve as models of correct deportment, may, in the heat of debate, so far forget all that is due to public opinion and self-esteem, as to become a precedent and apology for those who pretend to be misled by the example of such men, while they are, in fact, only pursuing the bent of their own depraved minds and degraded habits. The contest, in the present instance, was carried to such an extent, that the Lord Chief Justice of the King's Bench intimated that he must interfere, but was prevented from issuing his warrant by an assurance from the Speaker that he would take the necessary measures for preventing a breach of the peace*. Mr. Flood, on a subsequent evening, entered into a long vindication of his public conduct; but a debate was prevented by a motion to adjourn.

Pursuant to resolutions at the Dungannon meeting, the volunteers had formed a national convention in Dublin; and Mr. Flood moved for leave to bring in a bill for the more equal representation of the people. The scene which took place is described by an eye witness as being almost terrific. Several opposition members, and all the delegates who had come from the convention, appeared in uniform. The orders of the House, the regulations of debate, and even the rules of conduct observed among gentlemen, were alike disregarded.

The Attorney-general, Mr. Yelverton, denied the right of the volunteers to dictate to Parliament; "we

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28th.
Altercations
between Mr.
Flood and Mr.
Grattan.

29th.

31st.

National con-
vention.

29th Nov.
Mr. Flood's
motion for
Reform.

Observations
of the Attorney-
general.

* For an account of the measures of the volunteers, the formation and proceedings of the convention, and this debate, see Hardy's Life of Lord Charlemont, vol. ii. p. 92 to 138: also Gordon's History, vol. ii. p. 287; and for some severe, though merited, remarks on the coarse personalities of Mr. Flood and Mr. Grattan, Lord Orford's, Works, vol. v. p. 495.

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“do not sit here,” he said, “to register the edicts of another assembly, or to receive directions at the point of the bayonet; so long as the volunteers confined themselves to their first line of conduct, it was their glory to preserve domestic peace, to render their country formidable to foreign enemies, to aid the civil magistrate, and to support the Parliament. They were then entitled to applause, and commanded respect; but, when they form themselves into a debating society, and, with that rude instrument the bayonet, probe and explore the constitution, which it requires the nicest hand to touch, respect and veneration for them are destroyed. If it be avowed that this proposition, originating with them, can be carried, it decides the question whether the House or the convention represents the people, and whether Parliament or the volunteers are to be obeyed.”

Mr. Flood's
reply.

A long debate ensued, in which Mr. Flood, although called upon, did not clearly disclose his plan. “As votes in this House,” he said, “go by tale, and not by weight, and as the vote of the meanest wretch that ever disgraced the walls of Parliament, representing the most venal borough, tells for as much as that of the most illustrious character, representing the first county in the kingdom, the people wish to correct the ill effects of this system by opening the boroughs and giving them an opportunity of being virtuous. This is the voice of the people, and it is opposed because it is said to be the demand of the volunteers; but the volunteers and the people are the same; they have been made constitutional by every act but that of being placed on your establishment, which they despise.” Such arguments produced little effect; the motion was lost by a very large majority*; and, in like manner, the House declared that it would maintain its just rights against all encroachments†; and voted unanimously an address to his Majesty, declaring their perfect satisfaction in the blessings enjoyed under his most auspicious reign, and the present happy con-

Motion lost.

Resolutions of
the House.

* 158 to 50.

† 150 to 60.

stitution, together with their determination to support those institutions with their lives and fortunes. After this defeat, the convention voted a loyal address to the King, and finally adjourned*.

Economy and retrenchment formed the subject of many animated debates; but no solid measure was brought forward for diminishing the public burthens, while an addition of four thousand pounds was made to the allowance of the Lord Lieutenant, an act of liberality against which Mr. Grattan, who was not in the House when the vote passed, inveighed vehemently, declaring that, if he had been present, it should have encountered his most strenuous opposition†.

While the Irish Parliament was thus occupied, that of Great Britain was engaged on Mr. Fox's India bill, and the other important affairs already noticed. On the expulsion of that ministry, the Earl of Northington resigned the vice-royalty; but the Duke of Rutland, his successor, was not appointed until nearly six weeks had elapsed. During this interregnum, Parliament was adjourned from time to time, but not without strong expressions of disapprobation, bordering on contumely, from some opposition members.

In the late debate, it may be seen that the pretensions of the volunteers occasioned alarm and anxiety to government: in fact, if they had persisted in the course they appeared to be taking, Ireland was entirely within their jurisdiction. Assuming that they had saved the state, they inferred that they had a right to govern it; and their claim was supported by some members in Parliament, and a large and clamorous party without. Not discouraged by the failure of Mr. Flood's first effort, reform was eagerly pressed, and numerous petitions presented to the House of Commons. The trade of Ireland, connected with the wants of the manufacturers and relief of the poor, formed another topic of public discussion; and a portion of the Roman Catholics appealed to the feelings and judgment

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1781.

Public expenditure.

Duke of Rutland, Lord Lieutenant.

1781.
4th January.

17th Feb.

Considerations on the volunteers.

Other topics agitated in Parliament.

Efforts of the Catholics.

* Irish Parliamentary Register, vol. ii. p. 325; Hardy's Life of Lord Charlemont, vol. ii. p. 142.

† Same, pp. 197. 213.

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of their countrymen for an abolition of the restraints and disabilities under which they had been placed by the policy of former times. Some had taken to arms, and raised corps of volunteers, composed entirely of persons of their own persuasion; over one of these Sir William Dillon, in the county of Meath, exercised a salutary restraining sway; but in Dublin, a body was collected, under the name of "The Irish Brigade," which, from its numbers, its composition, its resolves, and the description of its members, gave some alarm to government; but it soon became, for the present at least, perfectly tranquil*.

March 13th.
Mr. Flood
makes a new
motion for
reform.

Soon after his return from England, Mr. Flood moved for leave to bring in a bill to rectify certain defects in parliamentary representation. Since the failure of his former attempt, the subject had much engaged the attention of the people, and notions of reform had been received with approbation and adopted with ardour. The outline of the intended bill, as defined by Mr. Brownlow, who seconded the motion, was, "That the unjust privileges of boroughs should be abolished, the election of representatives placed in the body of the people, and corruption checked in the elected as well as the elector; thus would a real, and not a mere nominal, representation of the people be obtained."

Observations
of Sir John
Fitzgibbon.

Leave was given, without a division; but the new Attorney-general, Sir John Fitzgibbon, declared that he had opposed a similar motion, because, although disavowed, he knew that it came from an armed body of men; he knew that they had a committee, where it was debated, and it was notorious that, in obedience to the order of that armed body, the bill had been produced in Parliament. At present, the proposers of the measures were in their proper character; they were entitled to all respect, and he would enter into the debate, that the people might be convinced of the absurdity of their pursuit.

18th.
Motion to com-

When the bill was read a first time, Mr. Flood,

* Barrington's Historic Anecdotes, vol. i. p. 257.

having asked in what stage it was to be opposed, was informed that it would not be suffered to go unresisted into a committee.

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Thus apprized, Mr. Flood moved to commit the bill. A long and stormy debate ensued, which, as the motion was made on Saturday, detained the House till past three o'clock on Sunday morning. The defects of the measure were exposed by Mr. Bushe, who, in a speech of great length and ability, shewed the various clauses to be absurd in their terms, incapable of being carried into effect, destructive of rights acquired and inherited, imposing illegal and unintelligible oaths of qualification, full of political absurdities, and hostile to true freedom, by taking away the rights of those who, in their professions, had acquired opulence, the true basis of independence. "And are we," he said, "to send to a committee a heap of absurdities, which deserves to be committed to nothing but to the flames, because its title is a bill to rectify certain defects in our representation?"

1784.
mit the bill
opposed.
20th.

Speech of
Mr. Bushe.

Mr. Grattan, while he supported the motion for committing the bill, declared his belief that, although it never could, in its present form, be carried into effect, yet that one might be framed, by correcting all its defects, while its principles were preserved. It was lost by a great majority*.

Bill rejected.

Exasperated by this failure, an outrageous mob broke into the House; the Sergeant at Arms seized two, whom the Attorney-general was directed to prosecute. A committee was appointed to inquire into the conduct of the city magistrates, and an address was presented to the Lord Lieutenant, requesting him to offer rewards for apprehending more of the offenders. The committee reported that the Lord Mayor had seen, on Sunday, the day preceding the outrage, seditious handbills inciting the populace to disorder, and had taken no measures to prevent it; and a resolution of censure was carried, after a short debate†.

April 5th.
Violence of
the mob.

6th.

* 159 to 85; Parliamentary Register, vol. iii. pp. 13, and 43 to 85.

† 35 to 7.

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1784.
Newspapers.

20th.

Bill for regul-
ating them.

April 8th to
May 14th.

Seditious
societies
formed.

Their
cruelties.

The Lord
Lieutenant
insulted.

A Congress
proposed.

Complaint was made to the House against some newspapers, for having promoted the illegal proceedings of the populace. Carey, the printer, and Bingley the supposed publisher, of the "The Volunteer's Journal, or Irish Herald," were taken into custody; but, after some examination, discharged, without paying fees, and no effectual proceedings were instituted, although the House declared the publication to be a daring, false, scandalous, and seditious libel, and although rewards were offered, by proclamation, for bringing the offenders to justice*.

A bill was introduced, in consequence of this transaction, and passed, after much discussion, which required that the real printer and proprietor of every newspaper should enter his name, upon oath, at the Stamp Office, with a recognizance of five hundred pounds, to answer all civil suits; and it prohibited, under a penalty, the receipt of money for inserting or omitting any slanderous matter.

In this period, and during the remainder of the year, every effort was made to excite and inflame the people. Tumultuous associations were formed under the name of aggregate bodies†; some adopted the North American practice of tarring and feathering their victims‡; some, more desperately inhuman, called themselves houghers, and deliberately maimed the objects of their vengeance, particularly soldiers; insomuch that an act of Parliament became necessary to restrain their violence, and to make provisions for the unhappy men whom they had crippled§. The Lord Lieutenant was publicly insulted by the rabble, and the rebels, who had formerly disturbed the country under the name of Whiteboys, again drew out their squadrons. Sheriffs were required to call meetings for the election of persons to sit in a new assembly to be called a Congress; the Sheriff of the county of

* Mr. Carey converted himself into a complainant, by charging the Serjeant at Arms with cruelty and oppression; but the House, by 43 votes to 3, decided that the conduct of their officer had been cautious, firm, and humane.

† Irish Debates, vol. iii. p. 152.

‡ Plowden, vol. ii. p. 95.

§ Debates, vol. iii. pp. 96, 105, 170, 227.

Dublin, although, in common with all other returning officers, he had been warned to desist, was weak enough to comply, and was prosecuted to conviction by the Attorney-general; but, as no criminal intention could be collected from his life, connexions, or conduct in other respects, proceedings against him were not severely pressed; he was fined five marks and imprisoned a week*.

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In the course of these transactions, the state of the Roman Catholics, their disabilities and their claims, were occasionally, but very slightly, considered. Major Doyle† is said to have been the first person who expressed an opinion favourable to them in the House of Commons. In the debate on Mr. Flood's first motion, he objected to any parliamentary reform, unless they were included in the provisions of the act. The advocates of general liberty in the convention did not take up this proposition; and the subsequent agitation of it, at some of their meetings, caused a coldness, distaste, and mutual distrust among the Volunteers, which ended in the dissolution of the body. This remarkable event took place in a manner which excited general surprise. Constituted and organized as they were; formidable in numbers, fierce in debate, vigorous in resolution, commanded and directed by noblemen of high rank, and regarded with affection by one party, and alarm by the other, they disappeared like a bubble on the face of the stream. At night, they existed with all their attributes of power and their claims to respect; on the following day, the room of their assembly was shut, their colours waved no more, their uniform no longer was seen in the streets, and the body, without formal order or public notice, was disbanded. For this strange dissolution of such a corps no adequate reason has been assigned, and the causes which have been framed on conjecture seem utterly inadequate to the effect‡.

Conduct
toward
Catholics.

* See Plowden, vol. ii. p. 94, et seqq.; Hardy's Life of Lord Charlemont, vol. ii. p. 146; Seward's Collectanea, vol. ii. c. 17.

† Afterward Major General Sir John Doyle, Governor of Guernsey.

‡ Plowden, vol. ii. p. 105. And for some excellent information and judicious remarks on the formation, composition, and conduct of this body, see Observa-

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1784.

Moderate
behaviour of
the Catholics.Dr. Troy's
Letter.

Nov. 12th.

The Catholics at this period had not, as a class of society, put forth any claims. They had held no general meetings, preferred no petitions, nor had they availed themselves of the press to make a party in the nation. On the contrary, when the Whiteboys occasioned general alarm, Dr. Troy, the titular Bishop of Ossory, wrote a firm, manly, and truly Christian exhortation, which was read in all chapels throughout his diocese, and printed in the public papers, invoking the gratitude of his followers to Providence for a plentiful crop; declaring the association oaths taken by the Whiteboys to be bonds of iniquity, unlawful, wicked, and damnable; and denouncing those deluded offenders, who called themselves Catholics, as scandalous and rotten members of the Holy Church, and already cut off from it by a sentence of excommunication solemnly fulminated against them*. For this conduct Dr. Troy was thanked, in warm terms, in a letter written by the command of the Viceroy†.

State of com-
merce.

Distress among the manufacturers, and a consequent agitation of the public mind, called imperiously on government to consider the state of commerce, and the means of relief. The non-importation agreements, which had been entered into during the war, for the purpose of distressing Great Britain, had not only failed in their effect, but now recoiled with violence on their projectors. Yet, during the present reign at least, the supporters of this measure could find no excuse in the conduct of England. From the reign of Charles the Second to the death of George the Second, many acts had passed restraining the export and import trade of Ireland, both as to places and articles of traffic. A more liberal and generous practice afterward prevailed; but the blessings of prosperity did not immediately follow. The merchants of Ireland rushed too eagerly into the pursuit of gain, and forgetting

tions on the Manufactures, Trade, and present State of Ireland, by John Lord Sheffield, p. 360 to the end. See also Williams's *Life of Sir Thomas Lawrence*, vol. i. p. 320.

* 17th October, 1779.

† Seward's *Collectanea*, vol. ii. p. 431.

that an export trade, to be successfully conducted, requires capital sufficient to bear the disappointment of failing remittances and dishonest correspondents; forgetting that, in every manufactured article, they would have powerful and experienced competitors in the markets; they strained their endeavours to furnish large supplies, giving credit beyond their means; while their commodities, hastily prepared by inexperienced workmen, gave little satisfaction, and produced inferior prices*. Commerce, in consequence, became stagnant; the unemployed manufacturers thronged the towns, and particularly the capital, in alarming numbers, exhibiting unfeigned proofs of the deepest distress. Sums of money were granted for their relief; measures were proposed, motions made, and an address to the King voted; but the extensive calamity was only soothed, not removed; and the people, pressed by want and urged by factious instigation, menaced and maltreated public officers, tarred and feathered those whom they considered as their enemies, because they dealt in imported goods; and, in their misdirected fury, performed the same operation on a coach, because it had been sent over by an English maker†.

At length, the question of trade was brought before the House by Mr. Gardiner, who, after a profound, learned, and truly candid speech, moved for resolutions declaring that the increasing importation of foreign manufactures, superseding those of the country, caused the existing poverty and distress; and demanded the interference of Parliament. Several debates ensued, and many principles were laid down and proposals discussed, tending chiefly to equalize the duties on exportation and importation between the two countries; but nothing was definitively arranged before the prorogation.

During the recess, these weighty matters underwent much consideration. The Lords of trade in England, aided by the Commissioners appointed on the part

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1781.

Distress of manufacturers.

Their outrages.

2nd April.
Resolutions moved in Parliament.

These complaints investigated in England

* Macpherson's Annals, vol. iv. p. 57.

† Macpherson's Annals, vol. iv. p. 58.

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1785.

Arrangement
communicated
to the Irish
Parliament,
February 7th.Resolutions
moved by Mr.
Orde.Which are
adopted.

9th.

11th.

25th January.
Mention of
Irish trade in
the King's
speech.

of Ireland, examined minutely into the interests of manufacturers of every description in both countries*; and an arrangement having been agreed on, Mr. Orde, secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, having read in Parliament a paragraph from his Excellency's speech, recommending the adoption of a commercial system, equitable and beneficial to both countries, tending to support the common interest, and to secure mutual satisfaction,—moved resolutions, declaring that all articles, not of the growth of Great Britain or Ireland, should be imported into each country from the other, under the same regulations and duties as were imposed on direct importation, and with the same drawbacks. That all prohibitions in either country against the importation of articles grown, produced, or manufactured, in the other, should be rescinded, and the duties equalized. Other resolutions related to internal taxation, to facilitating the corn trade, and to some details in foreign and international commerce.

These propositions were immediately attacked by Mr. Brownlow, with a warmth for which he afterward apologised, as the effect of misconception; but the House readily adopted them. Some petitions were presented from manufacturers and traders of different classes, but of no great force or importance: when they came to be finally discussed, a long debate produced but little substantial objection; they were unanimously agreed to by the Lords, and transmitted to England†.

In opening the session of the British Parliament, the King particularly recommended the adjustment of commercial intercourse with Ireland; the system which would unite both kingdoms the most closely in reciprocal advantage would best ensure the general prosperity. In the debates, this part of the speech was rather incidentally touched upon, than made the subject of any separate and substantial animadversion. Lord North, having objected in terms of pleasantry to

* See their Report, in a pamphlet published by Debrett, 1785.

† Irish Parliamentary Register, vol. iv. Plowden, vol. ii p. 112 et seqq.

the word "reciprocal," gave Mr. Pitt an opportunity of reminding him that, two years before, the same word had given exercise to his wit, and of shewing from the journals that the paragraph in question was only the echo of a resolution moved by the Secretary of State during the Rockingham administration*.

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1785.

On a subsequent day, Mr. Pitt gave notice of his intention to move, in a fortnight, for a call of the House, to take into consideration the reform of the representation, and another measure of "nearly equal" importance, the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland. Mr. Fox could see no reason why an affair so important as the intercourse between the two countries should be brought forward in the Parliament of Ireland, while that of England remained completely ignorant of the minister's intention; but Mr. Pitt successfully deprecated all expressions of opinion until the measure should be regularly introduced.

1st February
Mr. Pitt gives
notice of a
motion.

When a few days had been allowed for considering the resolutions of the Irish legislature, the House, on the motion of Mr. Pitt, resolved itself into a committee. The Irish resolutions were read, and the minister detailed the views of government, and their hopes that the justice and liberality of their proceedings would confer extensive good, and give general content. He declined going into details; but, on general principles, examined the proposed system in two points; its probable effect on our own particular commerce and manufactures, and the return which Ireland would make toward the common expense. There was nothing in the system to alarm the British manufacturer or trader. Goods, the produce of Europe, might now be imported into Britain, through Ireland, by the express authority of the Navigation Act. The new proposition applied only to Africa and America; for Asia was excluded by the monopoly of the East India Company. Would it, then, be wise in this country to give to Ireland the liberty of importing, and afterward of exporting to

22nd Feb.
Committee
formed.

* May 17th, 1782.

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1785.

Britain, the produce of our colonies in Africa and America? Intercourse with our West India Islands had already been given, and a free passage to all foreign markets had been opened. It was the natural right of Ireland; and the measure was one of justice, not of grace. Having animadverted on the futile fears which had been diffused, of the probable ascendancy of Irish commerce, and explained the intended equalizing of duties, he proposed a return to be made by Ireland for intended concessions, by appropriating a certain sum out of her revenues toward the support of the navy. He moved for a resolution of the committee, declaring it important that the commercial intercourse between the two countries should be finally adjusted, and Ireland admitted to a permanent participation in all commercial advantages, whenever their Parliament should permanently secure an aid, out of the surplus of the hereditary revenue, toward defraying the expense of protecting the general commerce. He would not press for an immediate vote, but postpone the further consideration of the question.

Several leading members who spoke, abstained from discussing the general merits, each confining himself to an explanation of some former opinion, intimating some present impression, or claiming to offer more detailed observations in future.

Alarm created.

From the time this measure had begun to be in agitation, no means were omitted for the excitement of alarms and combinations of the parties interested. Two kinds of opposition were formed; the one of persons who supposed that many branches of English trade would be seriously affected, if not altogether ruined; the other, of men who considered that the honour of Ireland was to be insulted, and her interests sacrificed. The opposition in the House of Commons was warm and unremitting; and the press sent forth numerous works, impeaching and defending the measure. Petitions were presented, and delay was requested, that more might be obtained. Liverpool, Manchester, and several other places, availed themselves of this postponement, and one member spoke of

Petitions.
March 3rd.

11th. 16th.

a petition which lay at his feet, for it was too heavy to be held in his hand, signed by eighty thousand manufacturers in Lancashire. The total number exceeded sixty*; and, after two months had been expended in hearing counsel, examining witnesses, and in desultory debates, Mr. Pitt introduced his propositions, which varied considerably from those agreed to in Ireland. One alteration, much complained of, was the second resolution, which subjected the revenue of Ireland to a contribution, in time of peace, toward the expenses of the naval force for protecting the trade and the general interests of the empire. Other resolutions prohibited the Irish from trading beyond the Cape of Good Hope during the existence of a chartered company; established the payment of duties and imposts; provided for the future regulation of fisheries, and protected copy-right and patents from invasion. The number of propositions was extended from eleven to twenty, and the alterations introduced were numerous and important†.

Mr. Pitt supported and explained his measure by a luminous speech, in which he endeavoured to shew that it would not be injurious to the commerce of this country, where capital, credit, and a refined and finished skill in manufacture, would always assure preponderance over every other nation.

Lord North and several distinguished members spoke on the other side, but no one at so much length, or with so much vigour and intelligence, as Mr. Fox. He objected to the propositions singly and collectively, averring, that as the Irish were greatly and exclusively interested in the conclusion of this bargain, their evidence might, perhaps, be deemed improper when brought forward to support the system. Whatever superiority we might enjoy in capital and superior workmanship, would be balanced by the cheapness of

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May 12th.
Mr. Pitt's proposition.

Debate on them.

* See General Index to the Journals of the House of Commons, vol. v. Title House 9, No. 194.

† The two sets of propositions or resolutions are given together in Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. p. 84. And they are printed, together with the bill founded on them, in a separate pamphlet; Stockdale, 1785.

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First proposi-
tion carried.

19th.
The others
debated and
agreed to.

22nd and 24th.

30th.
Debate on the
report.

labour in Ireland. On this point, he cited the evidence of the intelligent Mr. Peel, to shew that, as the finer parts of work cannot be carried on without the ruder, the greater part of superior manufacturers would abound where the less cultivated artist was most employed. Thus would an advantage be secured in manufactures of the finer kind, while in those of coarser quality Ireland must gain a decisive superiority.

At five o'clock in the morning, an adjournment was moved, but negatived*; as was a motion for an amendment by Mr. Pelham†; and, the first or general resolution having been carried, the House adjourned at six o'clock.

When the subject was next before the House, Lord North appeared the chief opponent of the third proposition; he was supported by Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox, and the minister by Mr. Grenville, Mr. Wilberforce, and Mr. Dundas; and the resolution was carried at half-past six o'clock. The remaining propositions were voted in the committee, after debates equally animated and an exact investigation of every point advanced.

On bringing up the report, and debating the resolutions collectively, the ground of opposition was completely changed; and they who had predicted the ruin of England, and the undue exaltation of Ireland, now treated the propositions as an attempt equally insidious and injurious, tending to subject Ireland, under the specious pretext of regulating duties, to a new system of taxation, at the discretion of the English Parliament. This discrepancy did not escape the attention of Mr. Pitt, and the manner in which he treated it, together with observations which he made on the inflammatory tendency of some of the speeches, drew on him the angry reprehension of Mr. Fox. Many qualities and habits in the personal and political character of the minister, he observed, had often surprised, and, he believed, confounded the speculations

* 281 to 155.

† 249 to 125

of every man who had much considered or analyzed his disposition; but his conduct on that night had reduced all that was unaccountable, incoherent, and contradictory in his character, in times past, to a mere nothing. He had left his hearers rapt in amazement, uncertain whether most to wonder at his extraordinary speech, or the frontless confidence with which it had been delivered. He concluded a speech, characterised by profound and solid argument, although mixed up with unsparing invective, by saying he would not barter English commerce for Irish slavery. Several amendments having been made, the resolutions were agreed to, and ordered to be communicated to the Lords, with a request of a conference.

In the upper House, the debate displayed no violence; but the opposition was strenuous and pertinacious. Counsel were heard, and witnesses examined; but neither the facts disclosed, nor the arguments founded on them, afford any novelty: a few amendments were made; and a short protest was signed by six peers. The resolutions were presented to the King, with an address. A draft of a bill was prepared, giving effect to the resolutions, and with them transmitted to Ireland.

In the interval which had thus elapsed, the elements of resistance in that country had become consolidated, and a vigorous opposition to the propositions was prepared. When Mr. Orde intimated his intention to introduce them, and requested an adjournment of ten days, Mr. Dennis Browne declared the arrangement totally impossible; Mr. Flood thought that no man would venture to bring the business forward in that House, and gave notice of a motion to declare that they would maintain in full and undiminished force the supremacy of the Parliament to legislate for Ireland in all cases. Mr. Grattan also pronounced the resolutions subversive of Irish liberty.

On the day appointed, Mr. Orde again required a delay until the morrow; and the indulgence was not granted without many bitter animadversions. The efforts of those who opposed the resolutions was to re-

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Propositions
agreed to.

June 7—8.
Propositions
debated in the
Lords.

11th and 14th.

July 25th.
Address voted.

Draft of a
bill sent to
Ireland.

Opposition
prepared in
Ireland.

August 2,
displayed in
Parliament.

11th.
Violent
speeches.

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present them as an attempt on the part of England to invade the legislative privilege of Ireland. Mr. Flood concluded an harangue directed to this object, by asking the House if they could be so corrupt, so base, as to give up the liberty of one of the only two countries where freedom was now enjoyed. "The people," he said, "will not, they must not, they shall not. I will raise my voice, and I will be heard at the extremities of the land. I am content to be a fellow-subject of my countrymen; but I will not be their fellow-slave. If you give leave to bring in such a bill, you are no longer a Parliament; I will no longer consider you so; meet it then boldly, and not like dastards, fearful to guard your rights; and, although you talk bravely to your wives and children, trembling at a foreign nation." Mr. Grattan spoke on the same side with equal positiveness, though with less apparent heat; and Mr. Curran declared that the Irish Parliament could hear of no resolutions but those which they themselves had sanctioned.

12th.
Mr. Orde
moves to bring
in the bill.

Opposition.

Speech of
Mr. Grattan.

Under circumstances thus unfavourable, and with a certain knowledge of the adverse opinion of the people at large, Mr. Orde moved for leave to bring in the expected bill. His speech was temperate, and explained clearly and exactly the several resolutions on which the bill was founded, their operation as severally considered, and their general effect as a plan of commercial treaty. Many opposition members spoke; but the oration which has been most applauded, and which seems to have fixed the attention of the public and the fate of the measure, was that of Mr. Grattan*. His effort was to make England and Ireland appear as rival and contending parties, the one endeavouring to over-reach, to coerce, and to enslave the other. Thus he gained the advantage of treating all attempts made by the promoters of the measure as mere endeavours of Englishmen, or their partizans, at encroachment and injustice tending to slavery, while he and his adher-

* All writers concur in bestowing the highest eulogies on this speech. See Hardy's *Life of Lord Charlemont*, vol. ii. p. 148.

ents stood on the lofty eminence of men defending their country, her rights and her freedom.

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The Attorney-general made an able speech in support of the propositions ; but the division on Mr. Orme's motion, affording a majority of nineteen only*, that number was not deemed sufficient to sustain so weighty a measure : when, therefore, the bill had been read a first time, Mr. Orde moved to have it printed, for the information of the country at large ; but declared that it would not then be further proceeded in. This event was hailed with joy, as if the nation had received a great deliverance. In Dublin there was a general illumination, and the whole country partook in the triumph.

Small majority.

15th.
The measure abandoned.

Rejoicings.

Even when the bill had been given up, a long debate, not unmingled with personal altercation, took place in the House of Commons, in consequence of an attempt of Mr. Flood to renew his motion respecting the power to legislate. At a late hour the Speaker complained of indisposition, and the House adjourned ; at their next meeting the clerk produced a letter, in which his advanced age, the decline of his strength, and (he was modestly pleased to add) of his understanding, with the fear of interruption to public business, were assigned by the Speaker as reasons which had determined him to retire. The House voted thanks to the right honourable Edmond Sexton Pery for his constant and unwearied attention, his unshaken integrity, and steady impartiality, during fourteen years ; and they added an address, praying the King to confer some signal mark of his favour. The right honourable John Foster was unanimously elected his successor.

Mr. Flood's motion.

Sept. 5th.
Resignation of the Speaker.

Succeeded by Mr. Foster.

At the last moment of the session, when an address to the Lord Lieutenant was moved, read, paragraph by paragraph, and unanimously assented to by the members present, Mr. Grattan, who came in toward the conclusion, uttered a violent denunciation against the commercial propositions, and objected to the address, as it

6th.
Address to the Lord Lieutenant.

* 127 to 108.

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January 25th.
Sessions of
Parliament in
England.Debate on
the address.The Earl of
Surrey.

Lord North.

might encourage a hope that they would be renewed. A vehement debate ensued, after which the original motion was carried by a majority of ten to one*.

Beside the affairs of Ireland, the King, in opening the session, recommended to the attention of the English Parliament the reports of the Commissioners of accounts, and the regulation of the public offices, and assured them of the good disposition of the continental powers toward this country.

Although this was noticed as one of the shortest speeches ever delivered†, and although, in the House of Lords, the address was voted without objection, it occasioned considerable debate in the House of Commons. The Earl of Surrey complained of omission; the matters adverted to were of infinite importance, while it remained undisclosed whether it was intended to impose new burthens or not; nothing was said about the reduction of the army; the proceedings in Ireland were most extraordinary; and, in this country, an attack had recently been made on the rights of juries, which had shocked and alarmed the whole kingdom‡. Was attention to be called to that, or to the Westminster scrutiny?

Lord North expressed his sentiments strongly against parliamentary reform; and Mr. Burke coincided in these opinions, adding that he understood it was intended to consist in an addition of sixteen members. If any alteration were made, he should consider

* 130 to 13. In reciting the above proceedings, the debates, both in England and Ireland, are rather described than detailed. They were of such great length, that even an outline of them would have occupied more space than is due to such a measure, although they afford, in many respects, an interesting display of the times, and will amply repay the curiosity of him who shall bestow on them the labour of perusal. See also Plowden's History of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 108 to 142; Seward's Collectanea, vol. ii. c. 2; Macpherson's Annals, vol. iv. p. 83; Grattan's Speeches, vol. i. p. 214. I have also consulted a very large number of tracts published on the occasion, particularly Lord Sheffield's Observations on the Manufactures, Trade, and present State of Ireland, 1785. Letters on the same Subject, and in answer to Lord Sheffield by Sir Lucius O'Brien. The proposed System of Trade with Ireland explained, Cadell; Reply to the Treasury pamphlet, intitled "The proposed System," &c. Debrett. Answer to the Reply, Stockdale. A candid Review of Mr. Pitt's twenty Resolutions. The Irish Protest to the ministerial Manifesto; with many more.

† By Mr. Burke. See his speech, Deb. vol. xxiv. p. 1399.

‡ By Mr. Justice Buller in a late trial, "The King against Dr. Shipley, "Dean of St. Asaph."

it as the death and funeral of the constitution ; and it was indifferent to him whether it was buried in linen or woollen, whether it had sixteen or sixty more pallbearers. Censuring the speech for omitting all mention of India, he drew an alarming picture of its condition, and moved an amendment referring to the state of that country.

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Mr. Fox recommended ministers to keep a wary eye on the conduct of the house of Bourbon, and to guard the balance of power in Europe, which had ever been thought material to the interests of this country.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Pitt bantered Lord North by referring to his expressions on former occasions, and, with respect to reform, treated him as a bigot. Such a fear of innovation as he professed would, if entertained at all times, have prevented improvement and left mankind in ignorance and barbarism. To Mr. Burke he observed, that, of all men, he was perhaps best qualified to judge of the comparison between a very short and a very long speech. For several years past, it had been the practice to recommend to the consideration of both Houses the state of Indian affairs ; and it had been also the uniform practice of Parliament to pay no attention to those recommendations. During the last session, however, the business had undergone minute discussion, and the regulations adopted had produced most salutary effects. He answered other objections, and explained the different points in the speech so satisfactorily, that the amendment was abandoned, and the address carried without a division.

Mr. Pitt.

The Westminster scrutiny engaged the early attention of the House. Mr. Welbore Ellis introduced the subject, by inquiring whether a certificate, pursuant to the resolution of the last session, had been returned ; and, being answered in the negative, he moved that Mr. Corbett, the High Bailiff, with Mr. Hargrave and Mr. Murphy, his assessor, should attend the House ; and, the following day, Colonel Fitzpatrick presented the petition of certain electors of Westminster, complaining that they were not legally and duly represented.

Westminster
scrutiny.

Feb. 1st.

2nd.

CHAP.
LVIII.

1785.
The High Bailiff and his assessors examined at the bar.
8th.

After a short delay, occasioned by a slight indisposition of Mr. Fox*, the parties were examined at the bar. It appeared that the whole number polled was 12,200; of these, 906 voted for tenements in the parish of St. Anne; 2,268 in that of St. Martin. The High Bailiff said that one of his chief inducements for granting a scrutiny was the great excess of voters at the late election over that between Trentham and Vandeput in 1750, when no more than 9400 voters appeared, of whom only 710 claimed residence in St. Anne's; and he knew of no increase of dwelling houses which could occasion such a difference. After a few days spent in making arrangements and fixing rules of proceeding, the scrutiny began. The agents of Sir Cecil Wray had proposed to investigate the united parishes of St. Margaret and St. John, supposed to be the principal seat of bad votes; and which inquiry, it was suggested, would have given a majority on the whole poll to Sir Cecil Wray: but this course was objected to by the agents of Mr. Fox; the precedent of a former scrutiny was followed, and, upon a ballot being taken, St. Anne's had the priority. In that parish Sir Cecil Wray objected to seventy-one votes, of whom twenty-five were declared unqualified; while, out of thirty-two litigated on the part of Mr. Fox, twenty were rejected. The scrutiny in St. Martin's was still proceeding; there Mr. Fox had lost eighty, and Sir Cecil Wray sixty, votes. Eight months of laborious sitting had already been consumed; and as only one fourth of the voters had been proceeded on, it was shewn that two years' further exertion would be requisite before the whole inquiry could be completed.

In explanation of this tardy progress, Mr. Corbett, while he allowed that his regulations had been generally attended to, said that the long examinations, cross examinations, and arguments on every point, occasioned great delay; and Mr. Murphy stated that each vote was tried with as much form and prolixity as a cause in Westminster Hall; that counsel claimed a

* He had strained the tendo Achilles.

right, in some cases, to make five speeches on one vote. This censure was not exclusively applied to the advocates on either side ; but the effect was incontestible. The authority of the High Bailiff too was insufficient ; he could not administer an oath ; he could not compel the attendance either of voter, witness, or even of constables, to maintain order ; consequently he had been annoyed by much misbehaviour ; but he had no officer to whose custody he could deliver offenders, nor did he know that any gaoler would have received them. Propositions in writing for shortening the proceedings had been put in on behalf of Sir Cecil Wray, but rejected on that of Mr. Fox.

Such was the sum of the evidence given on this unparalleled case. Many warm, though short, debates were maintained on the propriety of questions and the effect of answers, and the House did not rise till three in the morning. On the following day, Mr. Welbore Ellis moved that the High Bailiff should forthwith make a return. The debate was extremely spirited, and characterized by one remarkable circumstance. Mr. Windham, whose talents, learning, and brilliant eloquence were afterward so often to inform and delight his hearers, made, on that night, his first speech ; and Mr. Fox immediately congratulated the House on the accession of such abilities*.

An alteration was proposed, declaring that the High Bailiff was not precluded by the order of the House from making a return when he should feel satisfied, and that it did not appear that any unnecessary delay had occurred. The motion, thus framed, was carried on a division†.

A petition was then presented from certain electors : they were allowed to be heard by counsel ; but, the House having resolved that the legality of the

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1785.

9th.
Motion of Mr.
W. Ellis.

First Speech
of Mr. Wind-
ham.

Amendment
carried.

18th.
Counsel refuse
to address the
House.

* Another circumstance which occurred was somewhat ludicrous. Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor, declaring that he could not reconcile his ideas of law to the scrutiny, deprecated all censure for arrogance and presumption, by stating that he advanced his opinion with the humility which became him ; he was a very young man ; he might call himself a chicken in the profession. This phrase afforded, at the time, much food for pleasantry ; but the honourable member lived very long after it, honoured in society, useful to his country, and independent in his mind as in his fortune.

† 174 to 135.

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21st.Growing dis-
taste to the
scrutiny.

scrutiny should not be questioned, Mr. Erskine and Mr. Pigott declined addressing them.

A motion was again made for an immediate return according to the state of the poll; but lost, on a division, by a majority of nine only*.

It was now obvious that, with a majority so small, the opponents of Mr. Fox could not much longer maintain the conflict. In fact, the general feeling, in Parliament and without, was adverse to further investigation. They who most strongly disputed Mr. Fox's real majority could hardly avow the intention of keeping such a city as Westminster unrepresented during nearly half the probable duration of Parliament; they who were less sanguine experienced all the effects of weariness and uncertainty; while their opponents gained daily strength from all these and other causes. The investigation, so far as it had proceeded, had not justified the reasons on which it was granted. The representations of means used to gain a numerical majority for Mr. Fox, unsupported by new facts, were constantly diminishing in their effect; and it was not impossible that he, like Mr. Wilkes, might be regarded as a persecuted individual, against whom the whole strength of government was exerted, and for whom, in consequence, a sympathy, more generous than that of mere vulgar popularity, would be engendered.

March 3rd.
Petition from
the friends of
Sir Cecil
Wray.Termination
of the scrutiny
4th.

The next debate was occasioned by a petition from some electors in the interest of Sir Cecil Wray, praying for a continuance of the scrutiny. Little discussion arose. Alderman Sawbridge again moved for an immediate return, putting his proposition on sensible, practical grounds. It was well known, he said, that Sir Cecil Wray wished to be rid of the scrutiny; and although the pride of his committee might have stimulated them to sign the present petition, yet even they would be glad of an order of the House, as a good excuse for discontinuing the contest. There were not ten men in Parliament, he was convinced, who did not wish it was over, for reasons which he would not in-

* 145 to 136. There had been a division on the question for hearing counsel with a restriction, in which the numbers were 203 to 145.

quire into, because he wished not to provoke ill-humour, or say any thing invidious. Mr. Pitt, declining to argue a question already exhausted, moved that the House should adjourn; and on this amendment he was in a minority of thirty-eight*. The original motion was carried without a division, and on the following day the return was made, which seated Lord Hood and Mr. Fox as members for Westminster.

Mr. Fox made a motion that the former proceedings should be expunged from the Journals, which produced a most angry debate. Several members, uttering strong personalities, were called to order; and although the law was ably argued, the general tone of the discussion was such, as must have made its termination a subject of satisfaction to all. The division was decisively against the motion†. Such was the termination of this extraordinary contest, in which the minister had embarked without due consideration, and in the course of which he had the mortification to see his majority deserting him, and popular opinion strongly pronounced against him. Much more wise, regular, and legal it would have been to oblige the High Bailiff to make a return, leaving the parties to maintain their contest as individuals, on a petition, under the Grenville act. When the contest was ended, so little interest attached to the matter, that the scrutiny would only afford a theme for a newspaper paragraph, a tavern song, or a joke at the theatre; in a few months, it was justly pronounced that “the scrutiny was dead and gone for ever.”

At the close of this debate, Mr. Fox urged the necessity of preventing the recurrence of such proceedings; and Mr. Pitt announced his intention to bring in a bill for that purpose; but it would be opposed by the right honourable gentleman, for it would be an enacting and not merely a declaratory law. The Attorney-general did accordingly introduce a statute for limiting the duration of polls and scrutinies, and for other pur-

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LVIII.

1785.

Mr Fox's
motion.

9th.

Bill for regula-
tion of returns.

June 21st.

* 162 to 124.

† 242 to 137.

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July 14th.

April 18th.
Mr. Pitt's mo-
tion for reform
of Parliament.

Efforts to
create a feeling
in the public.

poses connected with elections. It was, as Mr. Pitt had predicted, opposed by Mr. Fox; but the debates produced only strong assertions on the one hand, that the scrutiny was illegal, and reprobated by all men; and, on the other, that it was perfectly legal, and that the proceedings in the House proved only that they were tired of it, as was shewn by their refusing to expunge the proceedings. A petition against the bill, from some electors of Westminster, was ordered to lie upon the table; but the prayer to be heard by counsel was refused*. By this act, polls were to be closed on the fifteenth day; the return to be made immediately, unless a scrutiny was granted, and in that case, in thirty days at the furthest after the close of the poll†.

Long before the termination of this proceeding, Mr. Pitt had made his promised motion for a reform in the representation. From what has already been stated of the efforts made in Ireland on this subject, it will be anticipated that no supineness prevailed in England. Beside what was addressed to the volunteers, delegates, and other bodies in that country, and which, being published, addressed itself equally to the people of England, several intelligent and active persons, as well through the press as by private correspondence, endeavoured to stimulate the zeal of individuals and to create a general feeling in the public‡. Yet the people were not generally interested in the question. The propositions, which appeared to be plain and obvious in themselves, did not seem to bear the conclusions which were sought to be deduced; there was no longer, as on a former occasion, a great prevailing evil, an expensive and unsuccessful war, to serve as a topic for inflaming the public mind, and a languid indifference generally prevailed.

* 55 to 18.

† See the statute 25th Geo. III. c. 84. Also the Parliamentary History, vol. xxv. p. 913, et seqq. and the Journals, vol. xl. To conclude the narrative of the Westminster Election: Mr. Fox brought an action in the Court of Common Pleas against Mr. Corbett, the High Bailiff, and recovered two thousand pounds damages.

‡ Conspicuous among these were Major Cartwright, and that indefatigable advocate of reform, the Reverend C. Wyvill. His political papers on this subject are collected in five octavo volumes. There were also many anonymous pamphlets.

Mr. Pitt introduced the business with a temperate, able, and eloquent speech. He was aware of the division of sentiment, and of the pertinacity with which some men adhered to opinions inimical to every species of reform; who revered the constitution with superstitious awe, and would not suffer the unhallowed hands of a reformer to repair the injuries which they acknowledged; who feared to touch the sacred fabric, as there was no foreseeing to what alarming heights they might progressively ascend, under the mask of reformation. He meant to establish, as a first principle, that the number of the House should remain unchanged, and that the reform of decayed boroughs ought not to be effected by disfranchisement. Having investigated at large the state of the representation of boroughs, its origin and progress, he declared his desire to provide, that certain numbers of those which were decayed should cease to return members; the fact of their coming within that description to be decided by the number of houses. The representatives taken from these should be transferred to the counties, beginning with those which most required additions. Seventy-two would thus be added to the county members, in due proportions; and this number should be fixed and unalterable. He did not intend to disfranchise the boroughs suddenly, or by violence, but, on their own application; and, for this end, a fund was to be formed for the purchase of the franchises: some would immediately, and all would ultimately, apply for the price of disfranchisement; for the sum proposed to be given would be left to accumulate until it formed an irresistible temptation. If any small boroughs still remained, they might, in like manner, surrender their franchises, and their rights should be transferred to populous and flourishing towns. He would add the copyholders to the electors in counties, which would give great additional energy to representation. His motion for leave to bring in a bill was seconded by Mr. Duncombe.

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1785.

Mr. Pitt's
speech.

In the debate, no regular coherence of the party could be discerned, except in occasional expressions

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which denoted that the habits of spirited contention could not, even for a moment, be subdued; Mr. Pitt was supported, not only by Mr. Dundas, the Attorney-general, and Mr. Wilberforce, but by Mr. Fox; but found, among his strenuous opponents, Lord North and Mr. Burke; to these were added Lord Mulgrave, Mr. Powys, and Mr. Bankes; Mr. Sheridan gave a silent vote for the motion.

Mr. Powys.

Mr. Powys considered the measure, not as one of any individual, but as an act of the government. Far from being a measure called for by the public, there were only eight petitions on the table. He would not treat the motion with any reserve or respect; its purposes were so hostile to the constitution, that he would give it a direct and unequivocal negative.

Lord North.

Lord North's speech was luminous, and abounded in his usual strokes of wit; he descanted with great force on the small number of petitions; the absence of any from Birmingham, one of the places intended to be favoured with representatives; the thin attendance at a meeting in the city of London, where, although it was convened for the purpose, only three hundred were present; the exertions made by several persons, particularly the member for Suffolk and Mr. Wyvill, to get petitions, and with how little effect would easily be understood by comparing their success with the number presented against the Irish propositions. He gave the minister full credit for not intending, if he should prove successful, to go any further; but he could answer only for himself; other ministers might make what he had done a plea for doing more; and, again, others might continue reforming till there would be no end to innovation and experiment.

Mr. Fox

Mr. Fox defended innovation, which, he said, should be more properly called amendment. It was the practice in every species of government, except absolute monarchy. In democracy and aristocracy, gradual improvement was always taking place, when experience came in aid of theory and speculation.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Dundas having, for the first time on a question of reform, professed himself friendly to the measure,

was unsparingly ridiculed by Mr. Burke, who, when he had exhausted this part of his subject, made a vigorous attack on the plan itself. It offered, he said, one alternative, either to adopt this limited, confined plan of reform, or be, perhaps, liable to receive one from the Duke of Richmond on a more enlarged scale. He took an extensive view of the state of representation, and animadverted with severity on the correspondence of a reverend gentleman (Mr. Wyvill), from which he read extracts, and remarked, that whatever address the right honourable gentleman had shewn in rendering his plan palatable to all parties, he considered it as a mere delusion, an *ignus fatuus*, calculated to mislead and bewilder.

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Mr. Bankes observed, that, although a friend to reform, he must reprobate the present motion. Its absurdity was conspicuous; it declared that the right of voting in certain boroughs was not a property to be used in the way of traffic, and yet a sum was allotted for the purchase.

Mr. Bankes.

Mr. Pitt acknowledged that this observation hurt him more, as it proceeded from a friend. He defended this portion of his plan but feebly; it had become a necessary evil, if any reform was to take place.

Mr. Pitt.

On a division, the motion was lost by a majority of seventy-four*.

Motion
rejected.

It is remarkable that, in this protracted debate, which did not terminate till nearly four o'clock in the morning, no member who spoke in favour of the minister's plan pursued its different parts into their effective details, or hazarded a prediction that general good to the people or great satisfaction to any considerable portion could be the result. No such result was to be expected. They who had prepared their minds for annual parliaments and universal suffrage, would view this mitigated measure with contempt. Many, balancing the advantage to be gained against the evils to be incurred, would doubt whether the ex-

Observations.

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periment could be worth its risque; and all who venerated the constitution, both in form and in practice, must shrink with terror from a plan which, although it would give no immediate satisfaction, would yet be a precedent for any innovation, however bold and extensive. A strenuous advocate for the measure undertook, after it had been rejected, to explain it to the public, in hope, as he said, that it would meet their full approbation and support; and that their general sense, conveyed to Parliament, next winter, in decent and respectful petitions, would obtain a legislative sanction. The number of voters throughout the kingdom, which would be acquired by this change, was calculated at ninety-nine thousand, of whom seventy-two thousand would be copyholders, dispersed through fifty-two counties. The benefit, therefore, to be thus obtained, would, if the statement were correct, be that of enabling this number of additional voters to assist in elections, from which they had before been excluded. But the number would be considerably diminished when it should be considered that women and trustees are often copyholders, but cannot vote; and that many persons in every county are freeholders as well as copyholders, and would therefore want no assistance to enable them to give their suffrages. It might be fit that copyholders should take their share in elections; but a measure of disfranchisement and compensation could hardly be called for, in order that so small a number should obtain this right. Other parts of the plan, which were not explained in Parliament, were disclosed in this publication. Ten thousand householders were to return four members for the parishes of Mary-le-bone and Saint Pancras. Seven thousand freeholders of London were to be made voters. Birmingham, Sheffield, Manchester, and Leeds, which were supposed to contain nine thousand householders, were to return six representatives; and Scarborough and other towns, in which the right of voting was to be thrown open, were estimated to contain seven thousand additional

electors*. On this plan, it is almost needless to observe that the prediction of its advocate was not verified, nor his hopes realized. The winter came, but petitions never appeared, and the project was not resumed.

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In the speech from the throne, the attention of Parliament was called to the subject of finance. For the investigation of public accounts, a Board of Commissioners had been appointed during Lord North's administration, and they had presented twelve voluminous, able, and well-digested reports. In moving for leave to bring in bills founded on them, Mr. Pitt observed that the objects of attention had been the manner of collecting the revenue; the several offices of expenditure, the mode in which the public money was issued, chequed, controlled, and accounted for. Parliament had already made sufficient arrangements with respect to the collection; they had assigned fixed salaries to the commissioners of the land-tax, instead of fees and poundages; and the Post Office was so improved, that, instead of seven hundred, it was now paying into the treasury the weekly sum of three thousand pounds. The Pay Office had also been regulated; but, in the Navy Office balances had been suffered to accumulate in the hands of officers, long after they had quitted the public service. The present treasurer of the navy, Mr. Rose, had most laudably recommended that every treasurer, while in office, should close his accounts at the end of each year; and, on retiring, transfer the balances in hand to his successor; which should all be paid into the Bank. The latter regulation was to be extended to the Ordnance and Pay Offices. He proposed also, in conformity with the reports, to consolidate the different offices of audit for the several departments of expenditure into one general establishment, with efficient powers. When first he was in office, he had observed that, through relaxation and neglect, accountants had been permitted to retain balances, some even to the term of forty years. He had sug-

Finance.

Feb. 17th.
Regulation of
public offices.

* See Wyvill's Summary Explanation of Mr. Pitt's intended Bill. Political Papers, vol. ii. p. 357, and p. 584.

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Bills brought
in ;and passed.
March 8th.

Taxes.

gested an inquiry, and afterward, when out of office, had stated that the sums unaccounted for amounted to no less than forty-four millions. The subject was treated, at the time, with great pleasantry, as a mere chimera, a supposed discovery of stolen money, which he could rescue from the hands of the robbers ; but, in reality, what had been treated as a romance, had proved itself the tale of truth. Twenty-seven millions unaccounted for had been discovered ; a balance of two hundred and fifty-seven thousand pounds would be immediately collected ; and, on further inquiry, he expected that the balance would be considerably increased. He moved to bring in bills for better examining and auditing accounts, for appointing commissioners to inquire into the fees of offices and examine abuses, and for better regulating the office of treasurer of the navy. After a few unimportant observations from other members, the motions were agreed to, and the bills passed without much debate. A few words of opposition were offered on the third reading of that for appointing commissioners of accounts, which Mr. Sheridan considered unnecessary, Mr. Fox unconstitutional, and Mr. Burke a direct violation of Magna Charta.

In the selection of taxes for raising the supplies, the minister was not very fortunate. The annual sum required was four hundred and thirteen thousand pounds ; and, to meet the demand, an additional tax was imposed on male, and a new one on female servants ; on retail shops, according to the rent of the houses ; on post-horses of one half-penny per mile, a stamp duty on gloves ; a licence to be taken out by pawn-brokers ; and, in addition to these, a regulation on salt. The principal attacks of opposition were levelled against the assessments on shops, and on female servants. On the shop tax, much good argument was employed ; and, in hope to reconcile the parties, a licence was imposed on hawkers and pedlars. On the maid servants, much argument, some wit, and, to say the truth, a little ribaldry, were displayed. The bills passed. There were besides, in the course of the session, taxes imposed, by way of licence, on coach-

makers, and on sportsmen carrying arms with intent to kill game, and a sum was raised by a lottery; but the two most obnoxious taxes were, after the experiment of a few years, repealed; the duty on gloves also was, upon a longer trial, found to be less beneficial to the state than injurious to vendors and to society, by the great encouragement it afforded to informers; and it was also discontinued.

The session was not closed by a speech from the throne, but merely adjourned.

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August 2nd.
End of the
session.

CHAPTER THE FIFTY-NINTH.

1783—1786.

Occurrences on the Continent.—State of Holland.—Views and conduct of the Emperor of Germany—his desire to abrogate the barrier treaty—begins hostile operations against the Dutch.—His demands.—Opening of the Scheldt.—Views of France.—Conduct of the Dutch.—Termination of the affair humiliating to the Emperor.—Effect of these proceedings.—Meeting of Parliament.—Debate on the address in the House of Lords.—Amendment moved in the House of Commons.—Speeches of Mr. Fox.—Measures of finance.—Report of a committee.—Speech of Mr. Pitt.—A sinking fund proposed.—Objections of Sir Grey Cooper.—Answer.—Progress of the measure.—Resolutions moved by Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Fox's proposition—agreed to by Mr. Pitt—but withdrawn.—Proceedings in the House of Lords.—Motion of Earl Stanhope.—General views of the measure—which gives great satisfaction.—Arrears of the civil list.—A supply proposed.—Debate.—Mention of the Prince of Wales.—Supply granted.—Wine subjected to the excise.—Observations of Mr. Fox.—Duke of Richmond's plan of fortification—much discussed.—Motion in Parliament.—Speech of Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Bastard.—Amendment moved—and carried by the casting vote of the Speaker.—Regulation of the woods and forests.—Alteration in the militia laws.—Close of the session.

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LIX.

Occurrences
on the Conti-
nent.

CIRCUMSTANCES occurred on the Continent, during the recess of Parliament, which appeared to menace the tranquillity of Europe. A contention had arisen between the Emperor and the States General; but its abrupt and almost ridiculous termination formed a just contrast to the violence and haughty injustice which marked its beginning.

Joseph the Second was endowed with considerable talents and benevolent feelings. He was anxious for the glory and greatness of his dominions, and for the happiness of his people; but he had speculated rather extensively than wisely on principles of government, and had not sufficient calmness to allow causes gradually to produce their expected effects, or firmness to repair temporary discouragements by time and prudence. His internal reforms, sometimes characterized by childish frivolity, at others by a pernicious spirit of hazardous innovation, disgusted his subjects, offending alike the clergy, the nobility, and the people. While they attacked the establishments of religion and the privileges of the peers, they descended to minute particulars, from which not only present inconvenience was felt, but future evils apprehended. Thus he gave offence and alarm by edicts for numbering the inhabitants of houses in his hereditary dominions, preparatory, as it was believed, to a military conscription; for prohibiting the importation of foreign merchandizes; for preventing emigration, by the effect of which persons were not only restrained from quitting the kingdom, but even passing from one village to another, without entering into sureties; and for preventing the burial of corpses in winding sheets; they were merely to be sewed up in sacks*.

In his foreign politics, he was actuated by views of ambition, seeking to augment his power by strong alliances, and to extend his dominions by unprincipled aggressions. He had endeavoured, and, as he had reason to believe, successfully, to secure the friendship of the Empress of Russia. Of his two visits to the French court, and the change of his sentiments after the last, mention already has been made†. The favourable alteration, so beneficial at the time to France, is attributed in a great measure to his sister, who hoped, and, in the confidence of ingenuous youth, expected, by such means, to serve the interest of her husband, and conse-

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LIX.

1783.

Views and
conduct of the
Emperor.

* Letter from the Duke of Dorset to Lord Carmarthen; 6th Sept. 1784. State Papers.

† See Chapter 43, vol. iii. p. 290.

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1783.

His desire to
abrogate the
barrier treaty.

Projects of
Joseph the
Second.

quently to secure the gratitude and affection of his people, and to form a permanent union between her native and her adopted country. The attachment of Joseph to the interests of France was facilitated by an ambitious project he had formed to abrogate the barrier treaty, in which he was encouraged by the French ministers.

When the Dutch republic was finally severed from Spain*, the boundaries of Flanders had been settled by a formal compact. After the war of the succession, the Spanish low countries were allotted to Austria; but, by the barrier treaty†, the maritime powers, in consideration of their great expenses, annexed to this cession certain conditions, the performance of which was guaranteed by England. This treaty becoming the subject of much dispute, another was framed‡, by virtue of which the limits of the Dutch Republic were considerably extended; and, although the court of Vienna never formally acceded to this compact, it was always considered as in full force; so much so, that, after the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the barrier towns taken by the French were restored to the republic. The court of Vienna was always dissatisfied with this arrangement. From the time of its being concluded to the beginning of the seven years' war, Maria Theresa was in continual contention with England and Holland, on matters arising out of it; and Joseph the Second, finding Holland engaged in hostilities with her old ally, suddenly declared the barrier treaty obsolete, took upon himself the defence of the frontier, ordered the demolition of all the fortifications of the Netherlands, except Luxembourg, Ostend, and the citadels of Namur and Antwerp, and required the Dutch to withdraw their garrisons from the barrier towns§.

Beset by the evils of an unprosperous war, and divided by the influence of factions, the Dutch had neither strength nor spirit to vindicate their rights; and the Emperor, having ascertained, by personal obser-

* In 1664.

† Nov. 1715.

‡ In 1718.

§ In 1781.

vation, their feebleness and anarchy, determined to expel them from all the territory they had acquired since 1664.

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LIX.

1783.

While bent on these harsh proceedings, Joseph forgot that the treaty he so much desired to abrogate, although it might be galling to the pride of his family, was not less beneficial to him than to the maritime powers: while it continued in force, France could not overrun the Netherlands without engaging in a war with Great Britain and Holland. Confidently relying on the permanency of his newly formed friendship with the court of Versailles, he appears to have deemed this contingency beyond the scope of probability; and these principles and expectations had been fully and freely expressed by Prince Kaunitz to Count Wassenaar, plenipotentiary from the United Provinces. "The Emperor," he said, "will hear no more of barriers, for they no longer exist; every treaty, of which the basis is overturned, loses its effect: the barrier treaty was concluded against France; now our connexions with France render it null and useless, and afford a more secure barrier than the other, which is chimerical." To the observations of Wassenaar, that in this world systems are apt to change, Kaunitz replied, "the connexions which the House of Austria has formed are the consequences of a fixed and premeditated system; they are not calculated to last only for a short time, but will, at least, continue in force a hundred years. Even should a minister start up in the cabinet of Versailles or of Vienna, sufficiently insane to attempt breaking these connexions, he will be sent to the mad-house, instead of succeeding in abolishing so firm and well-cemented a system. The Emperor acts for your advantage, nor have you any cause of apprehension either from him or from France."

The first proceeding toward carrying into effect the violent resolves of the Emperor was extraordinary, or even singular. A soldier, having died in the fort of Liefkenstock, was, according to custom, carried out and interred in the neighbouring village of Docle. The

Commence-
ment of
adverse
operations.

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LIX.

1783.

1784.

Demands of
the Emperor.

bailiff of Beveren, for the first time, protested against this alleged violation of the imperial territory ; and, in a few days, a detachment from the garrison of Ghent dug up the body, and threw it into the fosse of the Dutch fort, while another party from Bruges took possession of the forts of Saint Donat, Saint Pierre, and Job. Early in the following year, a detachment from Antwerp surprised Old Lillo, a fort near New Lillo, where the Dutch ship, which guarded the entrance of the Scheldt, was stationed. Plenipotentiaries from both powers met at Brussels to attempt a reconciliation ; but the Emperor advanced new and unexpected demands. Beside the re-establishment of the ancient limits of Flanders, he required several cessions of territory in conformity to ancient treaties, or in acknowledgment of pretended rights, and the payment of large sums, claimed as due to the Sovereign of the Netherlands and his subjects. To these, the United States opposed counter-demands, under the barrier treaty, applied for the mediation of France, and marched troops from Breda to Maestricht.

August.
Opening of the
Scheldt.

Suddenly, Joseph offered to withdraw all these claims, on condition that the navigation of the Scheldt should be opened, and the people of the Netherlands allowed a free trade to the East Indies. He added, as a threat, that he should, from that moment, consider the navigation of the river to be free, and resent any opposition on the part of the Dutch as a declaration of hostilities.

Expectations
of Joseph.

In making these requisitions, the Emperor probably relied on the cordial aid of France and Russia, and on the inability and unwillingness of the United Provinces to engage with him in warlike conflict. France had not only encouraged, but even stimulated the attempts of Joseph to abolish the barrier treaty ; but his further proceedings demanded more consideration. She hoped, with the aid of Holland, not only to regain power in India, but even to overthrow that of Great Britain ; and, for that purpose, had begun extensive intrigues among the native powers. She likewise was taught to consider the disgrace of deserting

the cause of a country which, whether the policy were right or wrong, she had plunged into a most injurious hostility with a firm and ancient ally, and was beside admonished of the danger of cementing a coalition between the Cæsar of Vienna and the Zenobia of Petersburg*. Reasons were not wanting to determine the French cabinet against favouring too cordially an alliance which was viewed with suspicion and distaste by a large portion of the people. After expressing wishes to remain neutral, and using every means to ascertain the disposition of England, Louis finally declared his opposition to the opening of the disputed river, and his resolution to resist it, if necessary, by force of arms; and, accordingly, ordered two armies of observation, and sent a French general to lead the troops of the States; but it was understood that this resistance was to be conducted with gentleness, and a due regard to the honour and dignity of the Emperor. The Empress adhered to the cause of Joseph; but Prussia espoused that of the Dutch. England observed a strict neutrality, awaiting the result of a transaction which might dissolve the connexion between Austria and France, or bring back the Dutch to their old alliance.

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LIX.

1784.

This position of the principal powers was rendered more embarrassing by the vigour and resolution which the Republic evinced; they declared, from the first intimation of the design, that they would resist to the last extremity†. While the threat of the Emperor was yet recent, they captured a brig from Ostend, attempting to enter the river; and a vessel from Antwerp was fired at by a Dutch brig, and obliged to strike. The Emperor was so wrapt up in his opinion of the Dutch supineness, that, when informed of their having armed, he carelessly observed, "they will not fire;" and, after he had neglected all military preparations, he received, in Hungary, the unpalatable intelligence

Conduct of
the Dutch.

5th October.

Views of
France.

* The phrase of Mirabeau. Doubts concerning the Liberty of the Scheldt, p. 13.

† Letters between the Duke of Dorset and Lord Carmarthen, July 1st, December, 1784. State Papers.

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LIX.

1784.

Termination
of the affair
humiliating to
Joseph.

from Kaunitz, in the mortifying phrase—"but they "have fired;" with the addition that they were making vigorous and judicious preparations in every quarter.

Joseph now perceived the uncertainty and instability of the system which he had vainly supposed it would require a century to shake. He saw no termination of the difficulties into which he had plunged himself, but by receding from all his demands; and had no cover for his disgrace, but in pompous language, and the acquisition of small concessions as tributes to his injured honour. In relinquishing the points for which he had attempted to contend, he was entirely governed by the French, in whose hands he was helplessly deposited. Having received from the Count De Wassenaar and the Baron De Leyden an apology for the insult offered to the imperial flag, the negotiation for arrangement of differences was conducted at Versailles. Joseph, giving up the Scheldt, demanded the free navigation of the Meuse; that being refused, he required possession of Maestricht; and, when he could not obtain that, the discussion turned chiefly on a pecuniary indemnity. He required ten millions of guilders (£916,666); the Dutch declared they had no authority to exceed eight millions (£773,333); and, to crown the ridicule of the transaction, the French, who had fashioned the treaty in conformity to their own views of policy, paid the remaining two millions (£183,333). Preliminaries having been signed at Paris, the definitive treaty was executed at Fontainebleau, by which Joseph renounced the free navigation of the Scheldt, except to his own dominions, and accepted the ten millions of guilders as a compensation for Maestricht, and as a satisfaction for some injuries said to have been sustained during the contest. Agreeably to the views of France, he acquired the forts of Lillo and Liefkenstock; the limits of Dutch Flanders were reduced according to the convention of 1664; and thus the barrier treaty was in effect destroyed. Some mention was made of India; but it was finally settled that each power might regulate its own commerce and duties.

1785.

20th Sept.

Such a termination of such a contest could not but occasion a variety of observations. Considering the temper of all parties, it was not a matter of surprise that England was never referred to*. The French nation, ever ready to find topics of ridicule, was amply indulged on this occasion; and the King of Prussia predicted the pecuniary arrangement, by saying, in allusion to the practice of postilions, "Vergennes will compel the most serene Republic to purchase an accommodation with my brother Joseph, by giving him drink-money†."

In opening the session of Parliament, his Majesty mentioned the termination of disputes, and the assurances received from foreign powers of their friendly disposition, and particularly recommended to both Houses the extension of trade, the improvement of the revenue, and the increase of public credit. He also alluded to the unsuccessful attempt at establishing a commercial system with Ireland; in which salutary work he had not been yet enabled to make further progress.

An address was moved by the Earl of Morton, and seconded by Lord Fortescue, who spoke of the administration in the highest terms of compliment, on account of their indefatigable and successful endeavours to bring the country, depressed and divided as it had been, into its present flourishing state.

From these opinions Earl Fitzwilliam expressed a strong dissent. In rejecting the commercial treaty, the wisdom of Ireland had accomplished that which the prudence of this country could not achieve; and he moved an amendment, excluding the words "salutary work." The Earl of Carlisle, Lord Stormont, and Lord Loughborough, in supporting the amendment, not only censured the proceedings of government with respect to Ireland, but took an equally disadvantageous

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1785.
Effect of these
Proceedings.

1786.
January 4th.
Meeting of
Parliament.

Debate in the
Lords on the
address.

* See, on this subject, Mirabeau's Doubts, &c. p. 8.

† In this narrative I have chiefly relied on Mr. Archdeacon Coxe's History of the House of Austria, vol. iii. c. 46; and derived much information from a very well-written anonymous work, published by Edwards, Pall Mall, 1789, intitled History of the late Revolution in the Dutch Republic; also Mirabeau's Work already quoted. The gilders are taken at one shilling and tenpence sterling, and fractions omitted.

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LIX.

1786

view of the state of India, of the probable regulations respecting finance, and of the recent events on the continent. They were answered by the Marquis of Carmarthen, the Lord Chancellor, and the Earl of Hillsborough, and the address was agreed to without division.

Debate in the
House of
Commons.

Amendment
moved by
Lord Surrey.

In the House of Commons the debate was sustained with more animation. Mr. John Smyth having moved and Mr. Addington seconded the address, the Earl of Surrey stated his general objections. He maintained that the minister was not intitled to confidence; his measures were unwise, his taxes oppressive; the propositions respecting Ireland had given disgust in both countries; for the surplus in the revenue he was intitled to no credit; the maintenance of an ambassador to Madrid, who during two years had not been in Spain; and two in Paris on separate establishments; was a bad specimen of economy. He spoke also of the necessity of keeping up a navy equal to that of the House of Bourbon, but could see no occasion for maintaining as large a military force for a dismembered and diminished empire as had before been required. As an amendment, he moved that a paragraph relating to the Irish propositions should be omitted.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox said the speech was so cautiously worded, that he must observe rather on what it did not, than what it did, contain. The growing surplus of the revenue was matter of satisfaction; but signs of returning vigour would earlier have shewn themselves, had they not been retarded by the bad measures and abortive plans of ministers, and the jealousies and disgusts occasioned by the agitation of them. What, he asked, was intended to be done as an adjustment of the commercial intercourse with Ireland? The arrangement which had taken place between the Emperor and the Dutch did not assure the peace of the continent. The naval force of England ought not to equal that of France alone, for that formed only one branch of a formidable hostile confederacy of maritime powers against England. He, therefore, recommended a strict

alliance with Russia, and considered it an auspicious circumstance that a commercial treaty was forming with that country. Having dwelt for some time on the affairs of India, Mr. Fox concluded by animadverting on the Irish propositions, which, he said, placed ministers in a very contemptible light.

In answering these observations, Mr. Pitt seemed rather to amuse himself with the feebleness of his opponent, than put forth his own strength. He had always admired the peculiar dexterity which enabled him, on all occasions, to leave out of discussion the unfavourable parts of the subject, and he now found him equally dexterous in introducing, however foreign and unconnected, such matter as he expected would be advantageous. Thus he abandoned the matters contained in the speech, to discuss some that were, as he complained, omitted. His sentiments on the country being rather of a desponding cast, he had, no doubt, expected to find in the King's speech an opportunity of indulging his melancholy feelings; when disappointed, he had travelled into foreign countries; traversed the empires of Germany and Russia, visited Turkey and the Crimea; but, like other modern discoverers, deeming Europe too narrow for his inquiries, he had ransacked the Indies for sources of complaint and of despair. On the subject of finance, the minister sarcastically professed his joy that Mr. Fox had completely changed his sentiments since the last session. He had then expressed his fixed opinion that the revenue would fall short of some proposed point by the sum of fourteen hundred thousand pounds; and now he declared that no person could ever have doubted that there must be some surplus. He who had thought proper to observe that scarcely any part of the speech was deserving of consideration, had included in that remark a fact which tended to diminish the burthens of the country, to establish her credit and strengthen her resources, and had only expressed himself on it by the trivial term—some surplus. He treated the language of Mr. Fox concerning Ireland as unguarded and inflammatory, and said that no person could have

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Mr. Pitt.

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lamented more sincerely than himself over the failure of the Irish negotiation; he had fervently hoped that Great Britain might, upon the broad basis of mutual advantage, have transmitted to the sister kingdom a full share of her own commercial prosperity.

Mr. Fox having said a few words in explanation, and Mr. Francis having expatiated somewhat largely on the affairs of India, the address was agreed to without a division.

Finance.

21st March.
Report of
committee.29th.
Speech of
Mr. Pitt.

Finance, the principal subject specifically mentioned in the King's speech, engaged, in a considerable degree, the attention of Parliament. A Select Committee, to whom the matter had been referred, having presented, through Mr. Grenville, their chairman, an able and detailed report of the public income, in all its branches, Mr. Pitt*, in a Committee of the whole House, opened his plan for diminishing the burthens and reducing the debt of the nation. To follow him through his arithmetical details would be a tedious and unacceptable labour; to display the excellent oratory with which it is by all agreed that it was embellished, is not possible, from the imperfect reports that are preserved. In his exordium, he forcibly indicated the duty of Parliament to make efforts for the relief of the nation, and the general and anxious expectations which were entertained of benefits to be derived from the deliberations of that day. On their proceedings, not only the British public but other nations were looking with anxiety, as they would fix our rank among the powers of Europe. To behold this country, emerging from a most unfortunate war, which added such an overwhelming accumulation to sums before enormous; to behold this nation, boldly viewing its situation, and, instead of crouching in despair, establishing, upon a spirited and permanent plan, the means of relieving itself from all incumbrances, must give ideas of our resources and spirit of exertion, which would enable us to regain our just pre-eminence. The great points to be considered were, what measures ought to be

* See the Report at length, Journals, vol. xli. p. 376; or a very clear abstract of it, published in 8vo. by Stockdale.

taken to acquire a million annually for the reduction of the debt, and how it should be applied. "With
 "how much pleasure," he proceeded, "am I able to
 "add, that this can be effected without the imposition
 "of any heavy new burthens; it was an achievement
 "beyond the hopes of almost every man, and a subject
 "of rejoicing to every friend of the country." Availing himself of the labours of the Committee, Mr. Pitt then made a luminous statement of our financial condition, and proposed that the operation of reducing the debt should begin on the 5th of July. At that time, let £250,000 be paid into the hands of commissioners appointed for the purpose; and, after that, continued quarterly: this would make £750,000 to be expended during the three quarters. He shewed that the national expenditure would be £12,477,085, while the ways and means were estimated at £13,362,480, leaving a balance of £835,395, or £135,395 beyond the £750,000 he had before proposed to apply; and that other balances would still accrue, carrying the last-mentioned excess of balance beyond £440,000. He moved that the sum of one million per annum be granted to his Majesty, to be vested in commissioners, for reducing the national debt, to be charged upon, and payable out of, the surpluses and other revenues composing the fund commonly called the sinking fund.

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LIX.

1786.

Proposes a
sinking fund.

Sir Grey Cooper offered objections to the statement of the minister, and to the report of the committee; its basis was the receipts of the present year, which had been unusually ample. It was, as if the proprietor of a hop-ground should endeavour to persuade a lender of money that his freehold would afford good security for interest to the amount of its produce in a very fortunate season.

Objections of
Sir Grey
Cooper.

These observations were heard by the House with great impatience; and Mr. Fox, although he questioned many conclusions of the committee, and censured their mode of arriving at them, expressed doubts whether compelling the commissioners to lay out the money on certain days might not raise the market, to

Mr. Fox.

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LIX.

1786.

the injury of the public. Before the plan could work any beneficial effect, it was not improbable we might again engage in war, and be tempted to repeal the act, annul the institution, and divert the appropriation of its stock to the immediate services of the year: he, therefore, in forcible terms, recommended proceeding by individual subscription.

Answer.

Mr. Pitt shortly vindicated the statements of the committee. The idea of paying off a part of the debt by subscription had been suggested to him; but he would not adopt it, on account of certain inconveniences. His great desire was, in all times, particularly in war, to preserve the fund inalienable and sacred: to suffer it at any time, or on any pretence, to be diverted from its proper object, would be to ruin, defeat, and overturn the whole plan. The motion was agreed to without a division.

Progress of
the measure.

In this debate, no objection was offered against the principle of the proposed measure; the censures of opposition were applied only to the details of the committee, their supposed exaggerations in stating the financial prosperity of the nation, the remote period at which effectual relief was to be expected, and the probable intervention of occurrences by which that hope might be frustrated. The progress of the bill was not interrupted by any division. Mr. Sheridan, prefacing them with a speech in his usual style of strength and ability, moved fourteen resolutions, expressing opinions unfavorable to the report of the committee; but although he declared that his propositions contained only facts which could not be negatived, the House did negative them all, without a division.

April 6th.
Resolutions
moved by Mr.
Sheridan.

May 4th.

Mr. Fox's
proposition.
12th.

When the bill was in a committee, Mr. Fox observed that his great objection had been to making the sinking fund inalienable in time of war. Difficulties might exist in effecting a new loan, and, in such a case, the minister should not only propose taxes to pay the interest, but also to keep up the sinking fund; and the commissioners should be empowered to accept the loan, or so much of it as the public money in their hands would pay for. Thus if, when a new loan of

six millions was proposed, there should be one million in the hands of the commissioners, they should take so much of the loan, and the bonus or *douceur* would be a benefit to the public. Mr. Pitt giving his hearty concurrence, the clause was read and agreed to; but it was afterwards withdrawn, on the ground that, by weekly purchases, the price of stocks would be advanced: a benefit to the public which was deemed more than commensurate to the proposed measure*.

In the upper House, an opposition to the bill, in the shape of an improvement, was attempted. Earl Stanhope, who had before disclosed his opinions in a pamphlet, proposed, on the motion for committing the bill, a resolution, declaring it highly important that a provision for reduction of the national debt be permanent; the public faith so fully pledged by an express contract, that a breach of it should be equivalent to an act of bankruptcy. He proposed that books should be opened at the Bank, to receive the names of such holders of three per cent. stock as should be willing to accept of ninety pounds for every hundred, whenever the public should be desirous of redeeming at such price. His lordship's plan embraced various other details, and he supported his opinion by reading five letters from bankers and brokers; but the House disposed of it by a motion for the previous question†. The bill passed with little further discussion.

This act, which was extremely popular, was considered to form a certain, permanent, and inalienable fund for reducing the national debt, consisting of an annual million, and of all the annuities for lives or for limited terms as they should expire; the taxes appropriated for the payment of them still continuing to be levied. The commissioners were to pay off, with the consent of Parliament, any branch of the debt which might be above par, and buy any branches of it which

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Agreed to by
Mr. Pitt,

but withdrawn.

20th.
Proceedings in
the Lords.

Earl
Stanhope's
motion.

26th.

General view
of the measure.

* See Sinclair's History of the Revenue, vol. iii. p. 526, n.; and it should not be forgotten that the author claims to himself the credit of Mr. Fox's clause, having published it a twelvemonth before the motion was made.

† Three per cent. stock bore at this time the price of about £73 per cent.

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were below par* ; or, if there were no such means of employing the money, to purchase such funds as were thought most eligible, although above par. All dividends arising from such purchases were also to be immediately invested in the same manner. The purchases were to be made regularly, on four days in every week ; and the commissioners might subscribe a sum, not exceeding their annual income, in any new loan. And, lastly, whenever the income, including the annual income, should amount altogether to four millions, the dividends due on such part of the principal or capital stock as should thenceforth be paid off, should be considered as redeemed, and be disposed of as Parliament should direct†.

March 29th.
Arrears of the
civil list.

On the day that Mr. Pitt produced this plan to the House, he also was the bearer of a message from the King, requiring the aid of Parliament to discharge the arrears of the civil list, and an augmentation of its amount. Mr. Sheridan, in debating the other question, noticed this as a most inauspicious commencement of a day in which the public had been taught to entertain the pleasing expectation of finding a surplus revenue in their favour.

April 5th.
A supply pro-
posed.

In the Committee of Supply, the Chancellor of the Exchequer declared the regret felt by his Majesty in thus appealing to the liberality of Parliament. Every effort had been used to limit the expenses of the civil government and the royal household within the allotted sum of eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds. In the last regulation of the civil list, Parliament had provided that, out of nine hundred thousand pounds, a yearly deduction of fifty thousand should be made for discharging, by instalments, a sum of five hundred and fifty thousand pounds, issued for payment of former debts ; after which, the nine hundred thousand pounds was to be allotted to the civil list. It followed, either that Parliament had ordained that, at a future period,

* £100 is the par price of an annuity of £5. It has also been stated as the par price of one of £3 by most writers on the finances.

† Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. p. 101.

the amount of the civil list should be fifty thousand pounds more, or, for the present, by that sum less, than was necessary. Experience had proved the latter to be the case; a fresh debt of fifty thousand pounds had been incurred above what remained unpaid of the former arrear, making together two hundred and ten thousand pounds. He should, therefore, move for that sum which would defray incumbrances, and leave the entire annual sum of nine hundred thousand pounds for the civil list.

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A desultory conversation, rather than a debate, ensued, in which some pointed observations were made and judicious answers given. Mr. Drake said that, in looking over the account of the debt, he had been astonished to find one thousand and twenty-nine pounds charged as three quarters' salary due to the Master of the Hawks, while the Chairman of the Committee of that House received only fifteen pounds. Mr. Pitt explained, by stating that the office of keeper of the hawks was not retained either from necessity or from views of state and magnificence, but because it was a patent employment, granted in the reign of Charles the Second, and hereditary in the family of the Duke of St. Albans. Mr. W. Stanhope alluded to the situation of the Prince of Wales, his building Carlton House, a finer palace than, probably, he could afford. Several other members alluded to the insufficiency of His Royal Highness's allowance; and the same subject was renewed the following day: but Mr. Pitt declined all explanations, confining himself to the business before the House—the King's message. It was asserted that, in 1782, the King had given assurances of his having so reduced his expenses, that the eight hundred and fifty thousand pounds would be sufficient; and attempts were vainly made to draw from the premier a pledge that applications should not be renewed, and some censure was expressed on the appointment and salaries of ambassadors; but the resolutions passed without a division.

Debate.

Mention made
of the Prince
of Wales.

After a similar discussion, the Lords unanimously adopted the proposition.

April 5th.
Supply
granted.

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Wine sub-
jected to the
excise.

May 7th.

A measure of finance, which effected a considerable improvement in the revenue, and occasioned some discussion in Parliament, was the application of the excise law to the duty on wine, which had hitherto been under the customs only. The bill was first debated in the committee, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer, having adverted to the frauds which were practised, observed that, supposing the consumption at that day only equal to that of thirty-six years before, the annual loss of revenue by fraud exceeded two hundred and eighty thousand pounds. He alluded to the attempt which had been made by Sir Robert Walpole to introduce a similar regulation, the failure of which he ascribed to causes and circumstances which could no longer operate, or had ceased to exist. Fears were entertained that it would be attended with effects inconsistent with the constitution; that it would occasion a prodigious expense; that the people would be subject to slavery, by making their houses accessible at will to the excise officer; and that, by increasing their numbers to an undefined extent, an insurmountable bulwark would be added to the influence of the Crown at elections. Such were the arguments which excited a popular clamour, to which the minister was obliged to yield: but now, the excise, then in its infancy, was better understood; experience had shewn it to be the most effective, and least expensive, mode of collecting revenue; the charge would not exceed thirteen thousand pounds a year, a sum very insignificant in comparison with the improvement to be made: the number of additional officers would be less than one hundred and seventy; and even if so unimportant a body could be feared, as an addition to the influence of the Crown, they were by law prevented from voting or interfering at elections*. The new regulations of excise would subject wine to a survey and taking of stock, and required a permit on the transit from place to place. Thus the internal manufacture would become liable to the same duty as the foreign importa-

* By 22 Geo. III. c. 41, commonly called Mr. Crew's Act. See c. 43.

tion, and it would be found difficult to continue the frauds at present practised. Mr. Pitt treated, at great length, on general principles, and on their application to the present measure, and concluded by moving to repeal all present duties, and to substitute others.

Several members offered slight observations, rather applicable to their particular constituents than to the general subject, and the debate was closed by a wise and manly speech from Mr. Fox. If the proposed bill, he said, would materially affect the rights and liberties of the subject, he could not consent to it; he would never agree to regulations which bartered away freedom and the constitution for revenue. In proportion as the necessity for additional taxes arose, it became the duty of ministers to adopt the mode of collection least unpalatable to those who were to pay. But although placing wine under the excise might not be agreeable to the parties affected, yet a tax much more disadvantageous to the public might be an inevitable substitute. The bill passed.

Early in the session, a proposition was introduced for defending our two principal naval arsenals by fortifications. This plan avowedly emanated from the Duke of Richmond, master general of the ordnance. An outline had been submitted to the House during the late session*, on a report of the ordnance estimates, when Mr. Bastard moved that it should be recommended; and, after a spirited debate, in which the measure was explained and recommended by Mr. James Luttrell, the surveyor-general, and strenuously opposed by Captain Macbride, Mr. Courtenay, Colonel Barré, and General Burgoyne, Mr. Bastard's motion was withdrawn; but it was agreed that the plan, which required a great expenditure, should be reconsidered, and the opinions of experienced military and naval officers obtained†.

The proposed measure was vigorously discussed; able pamphlets, written on both sides‡, aided by other

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Observations
of Mr. Fox.

27th Feb.
Duke of Rich-
mond's plan of
fortification.

Much dis-
cussed.

* 14th March, 1785.

† Beside the Debates, see the Journals, vol. xl. p. 635.

‡ See, among others, a short Essay on the Means of Defence, &c. by an

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Board of
Officers
formed.

means of appeal to the public, shewed the eagerness of the parties, and the importance which they attached to the subject.

The board of officers to whom the plan was submitted was not convoked by virtue of any regular commission; but instructions under the King's sign manual were framed, containing certain data upon which their opinion was required. They sat at Portsmouth and Plymouth, and framed a report, according to the circumstances supposed and stated as data: but, although, in general, they assented to the propriety of securing the two naval arsenals by fortifications, they did not warrant the forming of any new works; they merely answered the questions submitted to them, without expressing decided approbation of any plan, and with a distinct refusal to produce one. Captain Macbride declared his opinion separately, that no new works were necessary, prefacing it with a series of objections, founded on the state of the coast, roadsteads, currents, tides, and anchorage. And several officers declared that their proceedings had been founded on the supposition of the whole fleet being absent for such a time that the enemy might bring an ample army, with a proportionate artillery, to attack one of these important arsenals. The bare possibility of such an event they did not pretend to deny; but how far it was probable, they left to his Majesty's wisdom; declining, for themselves, to give any opinion how far such a mere possibility would justify the erection of works so extensive as those proposed, and requiring such large garrisons to defend them*.

Motion in Par-
liament.Feb. 27.
Mr. Pitt.

Such were the circumstances under which this famous proposition was produced to the House. Mr. Pitt's speech was distinguished by his usual ability, but not by his usual animating and persuasive power: it was rather deprecatory of rash censures, and in answer to anticipated objections, than a fervid recom-

Officer; an Answer to it, published by Almon; and a Reply, in a Letter to the Duke of Richmond; all in 1785. These tracts were much referred to in the House of Commons.

* See as much of this Report as it was deemed prudent to publish, Annual Register, vol. xxviii. (1786) p. 95, n.

mendation of a plan of great national utility. He earnestly urged the opinion of the Board of Officers, that neither a naval nor a military force, singly, was adequate to the defence of the yards, but that it required a proper union of both. He adverted to the condition of the country during the American war, when a considerable part of our fleet was confined in port for the protection of the dock-yards; and thus we were obliged to do what Great Britain had never done before—to act merely on the defensive; wasting our resources, and impairing our strength; hopeless of benefit, and losing a great and valuable part of our possessions. To shew that the system of fortification was not, as had been asserted, new and unprecedented, he referred to a series of statutes, from the reign of Henry the Eighth to that of George the Second. The necessary increase of the standing army he considered as an unfounded alarm; the amount of expense was not such as to induce him, sincerely desirous as he was of alleviating the public burthens, to starve the public service, and, for the sake of adding a few hundred thousand pounds to the sinking fund, render that fund itself for ever abortive. Having made many more observations on the freedom which would be given to the navy for foreign expeditions, and, in case of invasion, the security which would accrue to our great arsenals, he concluded by moving a resolution for a permanent system of fortification.

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1783.

Mr. Bastard reprobated the manner in which the Board of Officers had been formed, averring that, by a contrivance of the Duke of Richmond, Lord Townshend, General Conway, and Lord Amhurst, had been excluded. He termed the Duke's fortifications absolutely Quixotic. The militia had been called the school of the army; might not these strong holds, wherein men were to be separated from their fellow subjects, be termed seminaries for soldiers and universities for prætorian bands? Would not the militia come out of garrison with minds rather prepared for joining the regular army, than inclined to return and mix with their countrymen employed in civil avoca-

Mr. Bastard

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1786.

Moves an
amendment.

Debate.

Motion lost by
the Speaker's
vote.16th June.
Woods and
forests.

5th July.

tions? He could not repress his indignation at the idea of tearing the ensign of British glory from the mast-head, and fixing it to a standard on the ramparts of a military garrison. He therefore moved an amendment, declaring fortifications, on the extensive plan proposed by the Board, inexpedient.

In an animated debate, the proposition was best defended by the Honourable Captain Berkeley, Mr. James Luttrell, Lord George Lennox, Lord Mahon, and Mr. Dundas; and most vigorously attacked by General Burgoyne, Captain Macbridge, Colonel Barré, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Fox, Lord North, and Mr. Windham. The speech of Mr. Sheridan was eminently argumentative and powerful, and acknowledged to be so by Mr. Fox.

On a division, which took place at seven in the morning, the numbers for and against the amendment were equal*; the casting vote, therefore, devolved on the Speaker, who, after a debate so protracted, declined stating his reasons; at that late period, he had too much respect for the House so to occupy time, but voted for the amendment; and thus the proposed measure miscarried†.

In consequence of a message from the King, a bill was brought in for effecting some regulations respecting woods and forests belonging to the Crown. A portion was to be sold, and the residue placed under the care of commissioners. It passed the House of Commons with little discussion, and without a division. In the upper House, it was severely censured by Lord Loughborough, who objected to the hasty manner in which all the antecedent proceedings had been taken, and condemned the bill as hostile to the rights of the subject and injurious to the interests of the Crown; and he divided the House; but the bill passed‡. A

* 169 each.

† Mr. Burke was absent from this debate, through indisposition; and Mr. Fox, in moving to postpone a motion of which his honourable friend had given notice, said it was a fortunate circumstance for the Speaker, as it had given him an opportunity of gaining immortal honour by his casting vote.

‡ Contents 14, proxies 14; non-contents 11, proxies 7.

protest was entered on the journals, signed by the noble judge and four other peers.

Other measures of less public interest engaged the attention of Parliament, and were disposed of in a summary manner. A change was effected in the militia laws, rendering that service less onerous to individuals, and less expensive to the nation, than it had been, by enacting that only two thirds of the number balloted and enrolled should be called out. An unsuccessful attempt was made to deprive certain officers of the ordnance of their right to vote at county elections. A similar fate attended a bill which was brought in for disposing of the bodies of convicts, which provided, among other things, that those who were executed for burglary should be delivered to the surgeons to be dissected. Lord Loughborough distinguished himself by his opposition to this measure; and, on his motion, the bill was rejected without a division.

In closing the session, his Majesty, after the usual approbation of the proceedings of Parliament, and thanks for the supplies they had granted, expressed his hopes that the friendly disposition of other nations would ensure the duration of peace, and of the benefits with which it had been attended.

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1786.

Alteration in
the militia
laws.

31st January.

30th March.

5th July.

11th July.
Close of the
session.

CHAPTER THE SIXTIETH.

1786—1787.

Commercial views of England and France.—Plenipotentiaries appointed, and a commercial treaty concluded.—Convention with Spain.—Political feeling.—The treaty with France much scrutinized.—Reflections cast on Mr. Eden.—Attack on the King by a mad woman.—Death of the Princess Amelia.—Meeting of Parliament.—Address in the House of Lords.—Address moved in the lower House.—Speech of Mr. Fox.—Mr. Pitt.—The Treaties discussed. Conference.—Debate in the House of Lords.—Regulations in the revenue.—Consolidation of duties moved by Mr. Pitt—highly approved by Mr. Burke—Sir Grey Cooper.—Bill passed.—Farming of the post-horse duties.—Regulation of lotteries.—Debts of the Prince of Wales.—State of the Prince.—Observations on his expenses.—Arrears of the duchy of Cornwall.—Pecuniary distress of the Prince.—His retrenchment.—His reported marriage.—Mention in Parliament of the Prince's embarrassments.—Motion of Alderman Newnham.—The Prince's supposed marriage adverted to by Mr. Rolle.—Explicitly denied by Mr. Fox.—Message from the King.—Supply voted.—Mr. Beaufoy's motion on the test and corporation laws.—Proceedings of the Dissenters.—Speech of Mr. Beaufoy.—Lord North.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Fox.—Sir William Dolben.—Motion lost.—Observations.—Attempts to improve the condition of criminals.—Change of the place of execution in London.—Transportation to New South Wales.—Close of the session.

Two arrangements, arising out of the restored peace and friendly feeling between this country and her late antagonists on the continent, were effected at this period, portending, as it was hoped, a lasting amity to the contracting parties; a commercial treaty with France, and a convention with Spain, relating to the evacuation of some territories on the Mosquito shore. That two neighbouring and highly-civilized communities, each possessing natural productions and manufactured luxuries, wanted, or at least much desired, by the other, should find mutual advantage in commercial intercourse, seems to be a proposition so evident, that, far from wondering at the formation of such a connexion, astonishment would rather be excited that benefits so obvious should be overlooked, and that pride and misdirected selfishness should so long have prevented two discerning nations from securing them. But where rivalry has subsisted for many generations, where jealousy in each of aggrandizement in the other has become a ruling principle, and where colonial interests and compacts with other nations interpose difficulties, much consideration is necessary in planning, and much address in perfecting, treaties in which a fair reciprocity of benefit may be expected.

Since the restoration of peace, the French government had been anxious to form useful commercial establishments, and to commence or renew connexions with foreign countries. Attempts were made to establish a new East India Company; treaties were concluded with Russia; and, if judicious enterprize had not been restrained by the distressed state of the finances, and the growing, although as yet slightly noticed, operations of faction, there is no reason to doubt that political wisdom would have been displayed in many more improvements in the political state of the country.

A commercial intercourse with Great Britain, conformably to the eighteenth article of the treaty of peace, having been resolved on, M. De Reyneval and Mr. Eden were appointed plenipotentiaries to conduct

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Commercial
views of
England and
France.

Plenipo-
tentiaries
appointed;

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and a com-
mercial treaty
concluded.
Sep. 26th.

the negotiation. By their judicious activity, a treaty was concluded; its basis was the discontinuance of prohibitions and prohibitory duties, so as to secure solid advantages to the industry of each nation, and put an end to contraband trade, which was equally injurious to the revenue, to legitimate commerce, and to public morals. The subjects of the contracting parties were free to import, in their own vessels, into the European dominions of each other, every kind of merchandize not particularly prohibited. They and their families might reside, either as householders or lodgers, free from every restraint with respect to religion, and from any exaction under the name of head-money, or *argent du chef*, and under no other obligation than that of duly conforming to the laws. They might travel throughout the country, and depart from it, without licences or passports; buy all lawful kinds of merchandize from manufacturers or others, and freely dispose of their own goods in warehouses or elsewhere, only paying the same imposts as the inhabitants of the place, or those established by this treaty. The wines of France were to be admitted into England, subject to the same duties as those of Portugal, and the existing rates on vinegar, brandy, and oil of olives, were to be reduced. A moderate ad valorem charge was made on beer, hardware, cutlery, cabinet ware, turnery, and all works of iron, steel, copper, and brass; cotton and woollen manufactures, including hosiery, sadlery, gauzes, made up millinery, porcelain, earthenware, and pottery; and on plate-glass and glass-ware in general. Provision was made for giving the best effect to these stipulations, and the interference of either nation in hostilities in which the other might be engaged, by equipping privateers, or other means, was distinctly renounced*.

A convention was concluded with Spain, founded on the fifth article of the treaty† of peace, in pursuance

July 14th.
Convention
with Spain.

* The treaty at large is to be seen in the Journals and Debates, the Annual Registers, and various other publications; also Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 112. et seqq.

† See Chapter 49, vol. iii. p. 448.

of which the British settlers were to evacuate all parts of the main-land of America under the sovereignty of Spain. Some jealously entertained by this power rendered a definite arrangement indispensable; and it was therefore concluded that the British settlers, scattered along the Mosquito shore and on the adjacent islands, should abandon their possessions. The King of Spain added to the district allowed to the logwood-cutters, on the Bay of Honduras, the tract of land extending from the river Balize, south to the river Sibun; and confirmed to them the right of cutting and shipping dye woods, mahogany, and all other kinds of wood, and every spontaneous production of the soil. He gave them also a small island on the coast called Cayo Casina, or St. George's Key; but they were restrained from erecting fortifications, and from planting sugar and other articles of colonial produce*.

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As it was not foreseen that this convention could much affect the general interests of the nation, or form the foundation of future disputes, it was little heeded, and produced no powerful animadversion. The French treaty, on the contrary, was attacked in every manner which the alarm of commercial cupidity, or the ingenuity of party spirit could devise. Mr. Eden's nomination, as negotiator, occasioned some personal attacks. He had been the firm friend of the opposition party, and styled the father of the coalition; by them he had been created a privy-counsellor, and appointed one of the joint vice-treasurers of Ireland; and he was now remarked to be the first who had seceded from that phalanx. Mr. Powys, in a committee of supply, had noticed the creation of an envoy extraordinary, as an affront to the Duke of Dorset, our ambassador in France; but Mr. Pitt, in answer, referred to precedents, and the peculiar qualifications of Mr. Eden.

Public feeling
on these
treaties.

That with
France much
scrutinized.

Reflections
cast on
Mr. Eden.

April 5th.

While the negotiation was in progress, unsparing efforts were made to create disgust in the public mind. The prejudices entertained against France were ap-

* See the convention, in the Journals, Debates, and Annual Registers; also Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. p. 111.

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LX.

1786.

Attack on the
King by a mad
woman.

2nd August.

pealed to; the new treaty was considered as a violation of our engagements with other powers; the navigation, revenue, and even the morals of the people, were supposed to be endangered; and it was attempted to be proved that every trade and manufacture extended to France would, in England, if not utterly ruined, be materially injured. If these efforts were intended to produce a feeling like that which was excited on the Irish propositions, it failed entirely, as the prevalent sentiments were those of satisfaction and hope.

It is necessary, in this place, to mention two incidents which occurred during the recess. The first was an attempt to assassinate the King. As his Majesty descended from his carriage to enter the palace at St. James's, a woman, of respectable appearance, tendered a paper, and, as he extended his arm to receive it, made a blow at him with a knife, which she held in her other hand. The King, stepping back, evaded the assault; and, as she attempted to renew it, she was seized, disarmed, and secured. As the agitation was very considerable, the King's first thought was to protect the assailant from violence. "I am not hurt," he exclaimed; "take care of the poor woman; do not hurt her." She was examined before the privy council, where her insanity was evident; but that a hasty conclusion might not be formed, she was detained in custody of a messenger four days, and her case investigated by eminent medical practitioners. It appeared that her name was Margaret Nicholson, a single woman, who maintained herself decently by needle-work. Her immediate delusion was, that she was entitled to the crown of England, and this error was mixed up with others of a prophetic character. She was transferred to Bethlehem hospital, where, after nearly forty years, she expired, without ever recovering her mental faculties. The loyalty and sensibility of the nation produced numerous affectionate addresses from all parts, which were reiterated by both Houses of Parliament.

Death of the
Princess

Shortly afterward, her Royal Highness the Princess Amelia, daughter of George the Second, died at an

advanced age. For a considerable time she had absented herself from court, indignant, as it was believed, at some supposed slight offered to her darling brother, the Duke of Cumberland. But she always lived in stately independence, not condescending to make herself the head or centre of a faction; nor was there any ill-will between her and her royal relatives; on the contrary, their Majesties occasionally visited her, and the last-born daughter of the Sovereign received her name.

At the meeting of Parliament, the treaty with France formed the principal topic in the King's speech. He trusted that it would encourage industry, extend lawful commerce, and, by promoting a beneficial intercourse between the subjects of both countries, render permanent the blessings of peace. In the House of Lords, the address, moved by the Earl of Rochford and seconded by Lord Dacre, was assented to without a word of animadversion.

In the House of Commons, the address was moved by Lord Viscount Compton, and seconded by Mr. Matthew Montague. No amendment was moved, nor did any material discussion take place. Mr. Fox declared that there was not, in the speech or the address, one sentiment in which he did not cordially agree; and he rejoiced that the House was not pledged to an approbation of the treaty of commerce, or to any future vote upon the subject. The promoters of the address, he observed, had expressed themselves as if England had ever provoked hostilities for the sake of extending dominion, or gratifying ambition. The fact was notoriously otherwise; he was Englishman enough to vindicate his country; and, if such a meeting were possible, he would assert the same in an assembly congregated to hear the cause of nations. We had, in all our wars, all our late wars at least, been forced to take up arms either in our own defence, or for the sake of defending the liberties and balance of power in Europe, endangered by the overwhelming military force of France, and her alarming endeavours to grasp at the government of all other nations. In her conduct

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1786.

Amelia.
11th October.

1787.

23rd January.
Meeting of
Parliament.

Unanimous
address of the
Lords.

Address
moved in the
House of
Commons.

Speech of Mr.
Fox.

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LX.

1787.

toward this and all other countries, she had only changed her means, not her end. In the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, her aim was open and avowed; the means offensive, arrogant, and shameless. She had seen her error, and, acting upon principles of a wiser policy, her means were now more mild, more amiable, more benevolent; they allured, they conciliated, they worked her purpose secretly, but securely. Formerly, oppression and force were her engines, engines so offensive and so unjustifiably exercised, as to rouse general indignation, and animate to resistance every power that possessed a spark of spirit, of generosity, or of goodness. Hence, the weak found advocates, the oppressed protection; and hence the daring attempts at universal monarchy were opposed, baffled, repelled, and frustrated. The engine with which France now operated her wished-for end was influence; that secret and almost resistless power with which ambition gains its purpose almost imperceptibly, but always effectually. At this time, he said, Louis the Sixteenth possessed abundantly more power than Louis the Fourteenth ever could boast of; and which, in all probability, would very shortly be considerably heightened. At such a moment, he could account for a connexion by treaty with the Christian King, only by supposing that there were, in this country, men so dazzled with the glory of Louis the Sixteenth, so conscious of the eminence to which France had lately attained, and of our own diminished splendour, that, lost in despondency, they seized the earliest moment of securing a claim to her protection. Notwithstanding the genius and character of the French, as a people; notwithstanding the levity of their manners, the fickleness of their minds, the constitutional mutability of their conduct; their cabinet had uniformly acted upon the same principle, aiming at the same end, and only changing the means. In confirmation of his opinions, Mr. Fox adverted to the interference of France in the treaties which we were concluding with other countries, and to the danger we incurred of losing all our remaining friends and allies by the formation of the present compact. He offered

these observations merely to repel the French mode of talking which had been used, and to rescue the nation from being thought liable to such reflections; but he gave an affirmative to the address.

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1787.

Mr. Pitt would not take upon himself to answer for the duration of any arrangement that could be overturned by caprice, error, or passion. Nations, as well as individuals, might become subject to the weaknesses inherent in human nature: those imperfections might probably, at some time, mingle in the resolutions and discussions of the legislature or councils of either kingdom, and undo what he flattered himself was now nearly perfected by the good sense and wisdom of both. How soon such an event might take place, he could not possibly foresee; but, considering war the greatest of all evils, and commerce the greatest felicity which a country could enjoy, it became the duty of government to endeavour, by every possible effort, to render the one permanent, and avert the other.

Mr. Pitt.

The treaties having been presented to Parliament, that with France formed the subject of many debates*; they possessed little interest at the time, and, at this period, it would be impossible to recommend them to the reader's attention. Speculations on probable commercial balances, on the depreciation of one species of manufacture, and the enhancing of another, on the export and import of the raw material, and the finished article of consumption, may derive temporary dignity from their momentary importance; but, after their day is passed, they cannot be reproduced to consideration. All arguments on these topics received their answer, not only from the supporters of government in the senate, but, negatively, from the commercial world without, who signed no petitions, nor even called meetings to consider or discuss the matter. One petition was presented from a body styled the General Chamber of Manufactures; but it was suffered quietly to lie on the table.

The treaties
discussed.

26th.

Feb 12.

A motion was also made for the delay of a week; 19th.

* See debates in the House of Commons, the 5th, 12th, 15th, 16th, 19th, 21st; and a sort of posthumous discussion, after the measure had long been carried, and was in full operation, on the 4th of April.

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21st.

which was lost by a great majority*. The last debate, in which the address to the Crown was carried after a division†, is rendered memorable, by producing the first parliamentary effort of Mr. afterward Earl, Grey, who strenuously opposed the address, and whose speech received applause from both sides.

In the course of these debates, Mr. Fox, while he deprecated the new compact, as a renunciation of the Methuen treaty, and our other commercial connexions, maintained that France was the natural foe of Great Britain, and that she wished, by entering into a commercial treaty, to tie our hands, and prevent us from engaging in alliances with other powers, and that this country ought not, in point of policy, to connect herself too closely with France. Mr. Francis expanded the thought, by many observations on inevitable national hostilities; but these opinions were little favoured by the House, and the motion thus opposed was carried by an ample majority‡.

21st.
Conference.

Debates in the
House of
Lords.

A conference took place between the two Houses; when the address had passed the Commons, several debates and divisions§ occurred; but the resolutions and address were always sustained by great majorities. The Bishop of Landaff, Dr. Watson, distinguished himself as an opponent of the measure. He too insisted on the unextinguishable hostility of France to this country, and adduced in proof, her consummate duplicity while embarking in the American war||. The Marquis of Lansdowne, in an able and statesman-like speech, refuted the propositions advanced by the Reverend Prelate. Portugal, and the Methuen treaty, were frequently adverted to in these debates; accounts were demanded and obtained; but no effect was produced by the discussion.

Jan. 9th.

Feb. 23.

Regulations in
the revenue.

In pursuance of a suggestion in his Majesty's speech, at the opening of the session, which recommended

* 153 to 70.

† 236 to 116.

‡ 258 to 118.

§ The 1st, 3rd, 6th, and 8th of March.

|| For a detailed account of the grounds and causes of the Reverend Prelate's opposition, and for opinions on his speech, see *Anecdotes of his Life*, written by himself, vol. i. p. 265, 8vo.

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June 26th.

Feb. 26.

Mr. Pitt proposes a consolidation of duties.

certain regulations for the ease of merchants, and for simplifying accounts in various branches of the revenue, the matter was referred to a committee, together with a voluminous report, being the fifteenth, from the commissioners of public accounts. The duties of customs, excise, and stamps, had been imposed and augmented at different periods, and different portions dedicated to separate services; distinct calculations were requisite in adjusting every payment, and thus the correct comprehension of them being rendered almost impossible to the party interested, he was thrown helpless into the hands of clerks, who were used to the management of such transactions.* Mr. Pitt proposed a measure of relief, which he introduced by a luminous speech. He ascribed the evil to the increasing commerce of the country, the accumulated burthens, and the extended resources, which had so widely exceeded expectation, and all grounds of calculation, as to be no longer applicable to the state either of trade or revenue. The evils he intended to remove were chiefly the complicated rates on various articles of commerce, too difficult for mercantile men to calculate and adjust. A book of rates had been compiled for their assistance, but that was rendered inefficient by changes which necessarily occurred; and the merchant could only rely on the expertness which practice had given to the officers of the customs; so that they who were appointed as a cheque upon them, were transformed into agents for them. To remedy this great abuse, he proposed to abolish all these complex and subdivided imposts, and to substitute one single duty on each article, equalling, as nearly as possible, the present amount, only changing the fractions for the nearest integral number. Every member who approved of the plan would, in a subject so complicated and detailed, dispense with as much form as possible. He would, therefore, satisfy himself with having all the resolutions understood as having been read *pro forma*; pledging himself that no important resolution

* Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 123.

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of the whole volume (for they amounted to nearly three thousand in number), should pass, without being particularly pressed on the attention of the committee. The plan had been referred to the boards of revenue, and received their perfect approbation; the trading interest had used great diligence in circulating its results; and, he was happy to say, that it was received by all with the highest satisfaction. He moved, "That "all duties of customs, excise, and certain stamps, do "cease, and others be substituted." There were certain specific exceptions, as malt, mum, cyder, and perry.

Highly ap-
proved by Mr.
Burke.

Mr. Burke immediately observed, that the measure was in itself so obviously necessary, beneficial, and desirable, and the right honourable gentleman had opened it with such extraordinary clearness and perspicuity, that he thought it did not become him, or those who, like him, unfortunately felt it their duty frequently to oppose the measures of government, to content themselves with a sullen acquiescence; but it behoved them to rise up manfully, and, doing justice to the right honourable gentleman's merit, return him thanks on behalf of themselves and the country, for having, in a manner so masterly and intelligible, brought forth a plan which promised ease and accommodation to all who were concerned in the commerce of the country and increase of the revenue.

Sir Grey
Cooper.

Sir Grey Cooper justly claimed a portion of the applause due to the plan for that administration of which he formed a part, under Lord North; it had made, he said, considerable progress in 1780 and 1781.

Bill passed.

To the further progress of this truly beneficial measure, no general opposition was made; but debates were entered into, and divisions took place in both Houses, on proposals to divide the bill into two, allotting to one those duties which would be created or altered by the commercial treaty with France*. It passed as originally framed.

Farming of
post-horse
duties.

As no new taxes were required, the consolidation

* March 7, 21; April 4, 19.

of duties was the principal operation of finance; the next measure was the farming of the duty on post horses, as a mode of preventing the frauds which had hitherto prevailed. The island was divided into districts, each of which, a few instances excepted, would contain a county. The post-horse duties in each were to be put up to auction; and, that the public might at least be sure of not losing, the bidders were to begin from that sum which the district, at its highest rate, had ever produced. The agreement was to continue three years, the lessee to keep a regular account of his receipts for the inspection of the treasury. Some opposition was made, and the House divided twice; but the debates contain no observations of importance or general interest.

Regulations were effected relative to the lottery; but they rather regarded the morals of the people than the interests of the revenue. A lottery was a financial resource, recommended by its imposing no burthen except on those who willingly offered to bear it. The argument, that it encouraged a spirit of gaming, was met by the observation that such a spirit could never be totally suppressed; and, therefore, if it could be turned to the advantage of the state, it required only that, by the vigilance of the legislature, it should be judiciously restrained and regulated. In fact, the desire of gaining wealth without the aid of patience, industry, or parsimony, is so much the matter of man's daily wish and contemplation, that it may almost be considered a part of his nature; and fortune is looked up to as a power to whom it is pleasant and desirable to consign a considerable sway in human affairs. Gaming, if it becomes the business of life, is the destroyer, not of substance alone, but of every social and manly feeling; but this is only true when much time is spent in the pursuit, and when it subjects its votary to degrading and dangerous associations. In the purchase of an entire lottery ticket, or of a share in one, none of this evil is incurred. The purchaser must await the determination of a chance which no effort of his own can promote, accelerate, or retard.

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25th April.

Regulations of
lotteries.

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Yet lotteries had, at different times, been variously viewed. Lord Thurlow observed they had obtained as far back as the time of Elizabeth. In the reign of William and Mary, they had been voted nuisances ; in that of Queen Anne, they had been revived, and had been used as instruments of state necessity till the present period.

But the question was not whether there should be lotteries or not ; no one seemed to think of abolishing them : the object was to suppress a most pernicious mode of adventure, called insuring. According to the number of tickets of which a state lottery was composed, the days of drawing were extended or compressed ; but they generally exceeded thirty. It was fairly within the scope of commercial dealing, that they who purchased tickets for sale, but might be obliged to hold them during several days of the drawing, should seek to protect themselves against loss by giving a regulated premium to receive the value of their tickets, if drawn before they could dispose of them. This fair and reasonable practice generated a most alarming and wide-spreading abuse. As the premiums, especially in the early days of drawing, were small, offices were opened in all parts of the town for receiving them, on the condition of paying considerable sums if the number proposed was drawn within the day. The deluded adventurer, who began by risking a mere trifle, was not aware that the benefits were so calculated in favour of the office-keeper, that if the hope of better success, after a first disappointment, led him to persevere in his speculation, he would become involved in an expense which would surely terminate in ruin. Opulent individuals, engaging in this species of play, diminished their fortunes and impaired their position in society ; but small tradesmen, clerks, and servants of both sexes, were led to dishonesty, felony, and frequently to suicide. Against this practice, an enactment was levelled which greatly diminished, if it could not wholly eradicate, the evil. It was provided, under severe penalties, that no man should receive or issue a policy, unless the party effect-

ing the engagement were in possession of the ticket issued. In debating this measure, the efficacy alone came in question ; the propriety was never doubted.

It became necessary, in the course of the session, to take into consideration the pecuniary affairs of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales ; the effects of their disorder were humiliating and even disgraceful.

In the prime of life, with a person endowed with every charm of beauty and grace, and embellished with every elegant accomplishment, the Prince of Wales became, by the lapse of time, a free agent, and the head of his own household and concerns, while his father was yet in the vigour of his years, and while the prospect of attaining supreme power was, in all probability, very remote. From the employments of active life, the heir apparent was properly precluded. In fact, the army alone was open to him ; and the jealousy of British patriotism must have been alarmed, had His Royal Highness, by assuming active command, appeared to make himself the centre of a body of officers. Doomed, then, to a life void of employment, youth, health, and the ability to please and to charm wherever he appeared, threw him, a spirited and eager votary, into the court of pleasure. Carlton House was the centre in which genius, taste, and wit, were to be found, and to which elegance, beauty, and refinement, in the the fair sex, most amply resorted. Never, perhaps, had society in England boasted such an union of the most brilliant qualities of the human mind as was assembled at the table of His Royal Highness ; never had female charms shone with more dazzling lustre, than at the parties where ladies were admitted. But it was soon discovered that, on the verge of the dominions of pleasure, vice and folly have established their empire. The practice, at that time general, of indulging in the joys of the bottle, led to frolics by which, if youth could afford an excuse, dignity was severely wounded. Gaming formed a resource of this joyous band, and the Prince was soon made to understand and to feel the dangerous uncertainties of the dice-box, and the still more fatal certainties of the turf.

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Debts of the
Prince of
Wales.

State of the
Prince.

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It has already been seen that His Royal Highness bestowed his favour on the opposition party. From them were his companions selected; and when it is remembered how much family dignity, as well as personal talent, was included in that class, it cannot be matter of astonishment, that a man of his age, taste, and temperament, should love to associate with the lofty peers, and able commanders, naval and military, who by this tie were attached to a body, in which were also to be found Lord North, Fox, Burke, Sheridan, Windham, Erskine, Fitzpatrick, and so many others whose names, separately taken, would each be deemed, for talent, knowledge, and wit, a sufficient ornament to any society*. The danger to his Royal Highness's popularity did not arise from the choice of his bosom friends and daily associates; the nation had long been used to view, in an heir apparent, the adherent of the party opposed to the court, or personally at variance with the Sovereign. From the revolution, this had constantly been the case; it is only necessary to intimate how the Princess, afterward Queen Anne, lived with King William and Queen Mary; how the family predilections of Anne prevented George the First from being known to the British people until he was called to govern them; the constant state of dispute in which George the Second lived with his father, which was but a precedent for that which afterward subsisted between himself and Prince Frederick. It might be maintained that an attachment of the heir apparent to the opposition party is beneficial both to the throne and to liberty. A King thus informed before his accession, is less likely than another to be swayed by the suggestions which lead to the desire of arbitrary power, or the delusions which are created by temporary and clamorous popularity; he is not likely to believe that all who support the crown and constitution are oppres-

* On this subject, see an anonymous work, in three volumes, intitled *Memoirs of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales*; J. F. Hughes; 1808, vol. i. and iii. It is not to be denied, that with these and many other illustrious names, some of an exceptionable description were mixed; but these persons seem to have been received more as affording a whimsical specimen of a class which his Royal Highness could not personally inspect, than as selected companions; they had no influence whatever in the company to which they were admitted.

sors of the people, nor that all who oppose the measures of the ministers aim at the subversion of the throne. They who censured the present connexion of the Prince, were influenced by various motives. The irregularities for which many of his most intimate friends were conspicuous, alarmed men of piety, virtue, and sound morals; and an opposition to Mr. Pitt, whose character was daily rising in the public estimation, and to the King, who was now elevated high above those mists which faction and misrepresentation had raised about his earlier life, was regarded with more than ordinary disapprobation. Yet, it is merely just to his Royal Highness to observe, that his regard to the opposition party never led him into a mode of conduct which would appear personally adverse to his royal parent. He had, on the first reading, supported Mr. Fox's India bill; but, when the feelings of his Majesty were clearly announced, he ceased to attend in his place in Parliament. During the discussions at the Saint Alban's tavern, and the Westminster election, his sentiments were unreservedly displayed; but although the wits who most attacked the person of the King were among the friends and guests of the Prince, he never uttered or sanctioned an expression which could have given pain or offence to his parent*.

If the expenditure of his Royal Highness can be censured as excessive, many circumstances of mitigation may be allowed. An expense of which he, no more than any other person who gives orders to an architect can be aware, was incurred by the alteration, or rather rebuilding, of Carlton House, the only residence he had in London. The unostentatious moderation of the royal court would have left England in a state of degrading obscurity when compared with France, had not the only Prince of the blood who had

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Observations
on the ex-
penses of
his Royal
Highness.

* In this number, I include the authors of such publications as the Criticisms on the Rolliad, and Probationary Odes for the Laureatship; works in which, although his Majesty's personal habits and political predilections were mercilessly ridiculed, the authors, men of family and good education, did not descend to the unmannerly scurrility afterward displayed by such writers as he who appeared under the name of Peter Pindar, and still less in the ferocious disloyalty which characterized subsequent publications

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Arrears of the
Duchy of
Cornwall.

an establishment exhibited some state and splendour before the French princes and nobles, the Count D'Artois, the Dukes of Orléans, De Lauzun, and others, who visited England in great magnificence.

Nor was the Prince altogether conscious that he was not entitled to a larger sum than that which he was accused of squandering. His legal advisers taught him to believe, and their opinion is very strongly supported, that, from the time of his birth, he had been absolutely intitled to the revenue of the Duchy of Cornwall, the accumulation of which, during his minority, would, on the most moderate computation, have exceeded two hundred and fifty thousand pounds. It was confidently believed that he would be put in possession of this sum; his engagements were regulated by this expectation, and it has been frequently observed, that money expected is always spent much more profusely than that which is actually in possession*.

1786.

Pecuniary distress of the Prince.

At length, the pecuniary wants of the Prince could no longer be parried. An execution for six hundred pounds was levied in Carlton House, and the sheriff's officer remained in possession two days, before a responsible surety could be procured for that trifling sum. The Prince applied to his Majesty for assistance; but his letter arrived most inauspiciously, at a moment when he was said to have sustained a very heavy loss at a fashionable gaming house. The required assistance was not granted, and his Royal Highness immediately announced a general retrenchment, which would reduce him below the level of a country gentleman of moderate estate. The works at Carlton House were stopped, and all the Prince's horses, not merely those kept for the turf, but those for the carriage, the saddle, and the most ordinary purposes, were advertised for sale.

His retrenchment.

This measure, by whomsoever advised, was most indiscreet and improper. It did not exhibit the tem-

* See Letters of John Wilkes to his Daughter, published by Longman, 1804, vol. iii, p. 202. The arrears are there reduced to £110,000.

perate resignation of a dignified mind to irresistible necessity, or the candid desire of a man convinced of his error to reform his course of life, but appeared like a fit of petulant indignation, in which, by the indiscriminate sacrifice of comfort as well as superfluity, the public was to be excited to take an interest, through compassion, in sufferings to which, in sober reason, little regard would be paid; or, perhaps, the King, stimulated by shame and pride, might give that aid which his better judgment had induced him to withhold. That a building should no longer proceed, when the funds out of which the artificers ought to be paid were anticipated, was but reasonable; and that a stud of horses, kept only for the purpose of gaming, should cease to be retained, would appear a virtuous and meritorious renunciation of an error; but that the heir of the British throne should divest himself of the means of appearing decently in public, in a carriage or on horseback, was more burlesque than heroic, and, accordingly, the surprise occasioned by the event was unmingled with any feeling of satisfaction*.

Another circumstance, of a nature more personal and private, was a cause of much discussion. It was reported, and by many believed, that his Royal Highness had undergone the ceremony of marriage with a lady of great personal charms, distinguished by a good understanding, and perfect manners, of an honourable family, and of the Catholic religion, whose name, as a widow, was Fitzherbert, that of her family being Smyth. As this lady, notwithstanding her avowed attachment to the Prince, continued to be received in society, some believed that the story of the marriage was a fable, courteously invented and circulated for the purpose of affording a pretext to those who, under all circumstances, did not think it necessary to withdraw their countenance from an accomplished individual in her situation. Others believed and maintained,

His reported
marriage.

* Same, vol. iii. p. 187. This author, who was well acquainted with the transactions of the political and fashionable world at the time, says, that Mr. Fox expressly disclaimed the most distant knowledge or suspicion of the matter; and said that the Prince acted immediately on receiving the King's letter, without consulting any one: p. 202.

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that the marriage ceremony had really been performed by a Popish priest; and one well-known writer on political subjects maintained, that the lady was, "in all respects, legally, really, worthily, and, happily for the country, her Royal Highness the Princess of Wales." To maintain this doctrine, it was necessary that the royal marriage act should be annulled; and this was performed in the easiest and most compendious manner, by acknowledging it to be an act of Parliament, but denying it to have the force of law*. Such arguments produced very little effect; indeed, had they been admitted, another consequence was distinctly to be apprehended; the forfeiture of the Prince's title to the throne, under the act of settlement; for, as in the Romish church matrimony is a sacrament, it would have been difficult to maintain that receiving it, at the hands of a priest in orders, was not holding communion with that church. But these were the mere speculations, which, in some degree, influenced the political and popular opinions of the day; the fact was never established by the slightest proof; it was denied by those most honoured with the Prince's confidence, and, indirectly, if not explicitly, by the Prince himself†.

March 29.
Mention in
Parliament of
the Prince's
embarrass-
ments.

When his Majesty's message respecting the arrears of the civil list came to the House of Commons, occasion was taken to introduce the embarrassments of the heir apparent. Mr. W. Stanhope intimated that £50,000 a year, out of the civil list, was amply suffi-

* Letter to a Friend on the reported Marriage of his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. By John Horne Tooke.

† On this subject, Mr. Wilkes relates the following anecdote:—The Bishop of B. told me that a most respectable lady, of his particular friendship, said to him, "The Prince came in here yesterday, overjoyed, saying, 'I never did better 'in any thing; I behaved incomparably well; I could not have thought it, as 'the case was quite new to me.' The lady answered, 'Your Royal Highness 'always behaves well; what was the case that was quite new to you?' The Prince replied, 'I was at a marriage, and gave the bride away.' The lady said, 'Was your Royal Highness never before at a marriage?' The Prince answered, 'laying his right hand with eagerness on his breast, 'Never, on my honour.'"—Wilkes's Letters to his Daughter, vol. iii. p. 299. All the topics relating to the Prince were discussed in three pamphlets, of no great ability, although they obtained a temporary reputation, called, *A Short Review of the Political State of Great Britain*;—*The People's Answer to the Short Review*;—and a Reply to both.

cient for the Prince; and if he had engaged in building a more expensive palace than his income would afford, the deficiency might be supplied by the sale of some manors in Cornwall. Mr. Sheridan endeavoured to raise an inference from some words uttered by Mr. Pitt, that if the income of his Royal Highness were found too small, application should be made to the House for an augmentation and payment of the debts already incurred; but Mr. Pitt declined entering into any such engagement, or even expressing an opinion; he contented himself with observing, that he had no instructions on the subject.

This state of things continued about nine months, when Alderman Newnham asked the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it was intended to make any proposition to rescue the Prince from his present embarrassed situation, intimating that it would depend on the answer whether or not he should move a parliamentary proceeding. Mr. Pitt said it was not his duty to bring forward such a matter without a command from his Majesty, which he had not received; and the Alderman gave notice that, on an early day, which he fixed, he would make a motion.

During the interval, it is said, great exertions were made to combine a party in the Prince's favour, and with so much success, that the minister felt uneasy*. Before the day mentioned by the Alderman had arrived, Mr. Pitt, seeing a full house, intimated the impropriety of introducing by surprise a matter of so much novelty and importance, and expressed a desire that Parliament should be apprized of the specific object, scope, and tendency of the intended proposition. Alderman Newnham said he had not decided on the exact form, but the object of his motion would be the rescue of his Royal Highness from his present embarrassed situation. Mr. Fox, observing that the subject was one of peculiar delicacy, hoped something might be done in the interim which would render the worthy magistrate's motion unnecessary.

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1786.

Express
motion on the
subject.

1787.
April 20th.

24th.

* So stated in the Annual Register, vol. xxix. p. 125.

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1787.

Mr. Pitt, who had before observed on the singularity of a member's giving notice of a motion before he had determined what it should be, said, in answer to Mr. Fox, that the principal delicacy of the question would lie in the necessity of inquiring into the causes of the circumstances which were proposed to be brought into discussion; and, for that reason, he would, from his profound respect for every part of the royal family, wish, if possible, to prevent discussion. If the honourable magistrate should determine to proceed, he would, however distressing it might be to him as an individual, discharge his duty to the public, and enter fully into the subject; but he still hoped that, on further reflection, he would forego his intention.

27th.

On several subsequent days, much irresolution and hesitation were shewn on both sides. To prevent any surmise of mistake, Alderman Newnham disclosed to the House the probable form of his motion. Mr. Pitt, while he professed the utmost good-will toward his Royal Highness, declared that, by the perseverance of the honourable member, he should be driven, though with infinite reluctance, to the disclosure of circumstances which he would otherwise think it his duty to conceal, and avowed his determined and fixed resolution to meet the proposition with an absolute negative.

The Prince's
supposed
marriage
adverted to.

Mr. Rolle, member for Devonshire, had declared, early in the debate, that the intended motion was one of peculiar delicacy, as the discussion would involve a question immediately affecting the constitution in church and state. As the meaning of this intimation could not be misunderstood, Mr. Sheridan expressed the earnest wish of His Royal Highness that no part of his conduct, circumstances, or situation, should be treated with ambiguity, concealment, or affected tenderness; but whatever related to him should be discussed openly, and with fair, manly, and direct examination. He had expected that, long before this, the awkwardness of discussion would have been prevented by relief from another quarter. Some expression used by Mr. Pitt having been construed into an allusion to the matter pointed at by Mr. Rolle, the minister,

while he earnestly deprecated the proposed discussion, declared that the particulars to which he referred, related only to the pecuniary situation of the Prince, and to a correspondence which had taken place on that subject, and had no connexion with any extraneous circumstances. Yet every one must be sensible that this correspondence, in itself, must contain matter of a nature too delicate to be a fit subject of public discussion, if it could be avoided.

Mr. Fox was absent during this debate; but, when the Alderman again claimed the attention of the House, he asserted, with direct authority from the Prince, that there was no part of his conduct, relating either to his debts, or to a late private correspondence, which he wished to be treated with any reserve. With respect to the intimation given by Mr. Rolle, as it was not distinctly explained, it was impossible to say, with any certainty, to what it referred; but he supposed it must be to that miserable calumny, that low, malicious falsehood which had been propagated without doors, and made the wanton sport of the vulgar. In that House, where it was known how frequent and common the falsehoods of the times were, he hoped a tale only fit to impose on the lowest order of persons in the streets would not have gained the smallest portion of credit; but, when it appeared that an invention so monstrous, a report of a fact which had not the slightest foundation, a report of a fact actually impossible to have happened, had been circulated with so much industry as to have made an impression on the minds of members of that house, it proved, at once, the uncommon pains taken by the enemies of his Royal Highness to propagate the grossest and most malignant falsehoods, to injure him in the opinion of his country. Mr. Rolle, expressing a doubt whether Mr. Fox's denial meant more than that, under existing laws, the marriage could not effectually have taken place, Mr. Fox said he did not so deny the calumny, but denied it in toto, in point of fact as well as law. It not only never could have happened legally, but never did happen in any way, and had, from the beginning, been a base and

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Explicitly
denied by
Mr. Fox.

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malicious falsehood; and he added, that he spoke from direct authority. The conversation was prolonged some time, in consequence of Mr. Rolle's declining to declare himself satisfied; he could only be induced to say that the right honourable gentleman had answered him, and the House would judge for themselves of the propriety of the answer; a mode of conduct which Mr. Grey reprobated as unmanly and ungenerous.

Message from
the King.

May 4th.

21st.

Shortly after this debate, it is said that Mr. Fox had an interview with the King, and some correspondence took place between the Prince and Mr. Pitt, with the knowledge and approbation of his Majesty*; and Alderman Newnham declined proceeding, as his motion was no longer necessary. Mr. Pitt declared that he had always considered it unnecessary, but did not see that it was more so at that time than when the notice was given. At length the Chancellor of the Exchequer presented a message from the King, in which he appealed to their liberality and attachment of Parliament. He could not, however, expect or desire assistance, but on a well-grounded expectation that the Prince would avoid contracting new debts. He had directed an additional sum of £10,000 per annum to be paid to him out of the civil list; and the Prince had given him the fullest assurances of his firm determination to confine his future expenses within his income; and had settled a plan for arranging them, and fixing an order for payment of his arrears.

24th.
Address
voted.

On the motion for an address, Mr. Pitt recapitulated the King's assurances, submitted to the House a state of the Prince's affairs, and trusted that, for reasons of feeling and respect, gentlemen would not institute any very strict scrutiny into the detail and nature of that account. By an unanimous vote, the House expressed a full reliance on the assurances which his Majesty had received, and desired him to direct the issue of £161,000 out of the civil list, for payment of

* From private information. Something on the subject is stated in the Parliamentary History, vol. xxvi. p. 1078. n.; but no authority is given, nor is it there traced to any authentic source.

his Royal Highness's debts, and £20,000 on account of the works at Carlton House.

The attention of Parliament was called to the disabilities and hardships sustained by the Protestant Dissenters, by Mr. Beaufoy, who moved for a committee of the whole house to consider of the acts which require persons, holding places in corporations, or places of trust under the Crown, to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper, according to the rites of the Church of England.

More than half a century had elapsed since this portion of the British subjects had submitted their case to Parliament. They now established a committee, which conducted their proceedings and held meetings in London; but they prepared no petition, wishing, as Mr. Beaufoy observed, to owe their success, not to the number of the claimants, but to the equity of the claim. They drew up, and circulated, an able and argumentative paper, distinguishing their case from that of the Roman Catholics; asserting their known attachment to his Majesty's government, and urging the great relief which, by repealing the obnoxious statutes, would be afforded to them, without injury to any one.

Mr. Beaufoy gave a history of the acts and of the measures which had been resorted to for the purpose of the present application. The disabilities which the law imposed on Dissenters were these. By the Corporation Act, no person was to be elected into any office who should not, within one year, have taken the sacrament; and the Test Act declared every person who should accept a civil office, or a commission in the army or navy, and who should not, within six months, receive the same sacrament, should be disabled from holding such office or commission; and if, without taking the sacramental qualification within the time prescribed, he continued to occupy a civil office, or to hold a military commission, he not only incurred a large pecuniary penalty, but was disabled for ever from bringing an action or prosecuting a suit at law or in equity, being guardian, executor, or administrator, or

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March 28th.
Mr. Beaufoy's
motion on the
test and corpo-
ration laws.

Proceedings
of the
Dissenters.

Speech of
Mr. Beaufoy.

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1787.

any legacy. He expatiated on the receiving injuries which would thus be the reward of a Dissenter whose zeal for the service of his country should have induced him to bear arms in her defence, and to hazard his life in her cause. From the Dissenter in the profession of a merchant, the benefit of character, and its best reward, public confidence and corporate trusts, were withheld; and, without a crime, he suffered the same stigma of reproach, dishonour, rejection, and infamy, which the law attaches to men publicly and judicially convicted of being perjured. As a proof that no such restrictive laws, no tests, were essential to the good and safety of the state, he referred to the example of Holland and of Scotland; of Prussia, Russia, Germany, and France; in neither of which they were resorted to. The annual acts of indemnity, he said, afforded no protection to the Dissenter, but only gave him an extension of the time within which the penal law could be put in force. Ever since the accession of William the Third gave to this country a constitution, the dissenters had acted uniformly in its support. The supposition that test and corporation laws were necessary to the safety of the established church, was a weak and groundless surmise. Strength to the church, and not weakness—security, and not danger—would be the consequence of repealing them; for the different classes of Dissenters had no general interest, no bond of union, no sufficient inducement to support each other, but that reproachful exclusion from public employments which was common to them all. A sense of oppression, resentment of injuries, indignation for unmerited disgrace, had formed the alliance between the Presbyterian, the Independent, and the Baptist, and had led them to forget their ancient disagreements, in the contemplation of their common wrongs. As to the supposition that the repeal of these laws would admit Roman Catholics into Parliament, and allow the highest offices of state to be held by Jews, or persons of any description not all professing the Christian religion, he answered that the followers of Rome would be kept in their present position by the oaths of supre-

macy and abjuration, which he did not attempt to repeal; and as to the persons who did not profess Christianity, he referred to the experience of the centuries which had elapsed from the conquest to the passing of those laws, in all which time no such person had ever attained a high office in the state. To shew the absurdity, the incredible folly, of these inhuman statutes, he said, “the benevolent Mr. Howard, “he upon whom every kingdom in Europe, England “excepted, would gladly confer, at least, the common “privileges of a citizen, and whom the proudest nation “might be happy to call her own,—he of whom a “right honourable member of this House has said, “‘he has visited all Europe—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; “‘not to make accurate measurements of the remains “‘of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the “‘curiosity of modern art; not to collect medals or “‘to collate manuscripts; but to dive into the depths “‘of dungeons, to plunge into the infection of hospitals, to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain, “‘to take the gage and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, “‘to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, “‘and to compare and collate the distresses of all men “‘in all countries:’—he, even he, is denied in England “the common rights of a subject; and his zeal for his “country having led him, a few years since, to serve “her in a troublesome and expensive civil employment, “without the sacramental qualification, which his religious persuasion would not permit him to take, the “penalties of the Test Act are still hanging over him; “and even now, on his return to his native country, “amidst the plaudits of an admiring world, it is in the “power of any desperate informer, who is willing to “take that road to wealth and damnation, to prosecute “him to conviction, and bring upon him those dreadful penalties which constitute the punishment of an “outlaw.”

Among many other circumstances, Mr. Beaufoy mentioned it as a hardship on the ministers of the

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1787.

Observations
of Lord North.

established church, that the law obliged them to administer the holy communion to all who applied for it as a qualification, without power to refuse, whatever might be their state of guilt and depravity; and, having treated on various other topics, he concluded with a strong appeal to the judgment, the wisdom, the patriotism, and the feelings of his hearers, in recommendation of the proposed repeal.

After a few words by Sir Henry Houghton, in seconding the motion, Lord North made a luminous and vigorous defence of the existing law. He disapproved of the manner in which the case was brought before the House, there being no petition to detail grievances or intreat precise remedies. The Dissenters seemed to depend entirely on the weight and abilities of the honourable members who made and seconded the motion. They proposed to repeal an act which was the great bulwark of the constitution, and recommended procedures contrary to the happy experience of a century. The Dissenters were desirous of privileges, and that a line should be drawn which they were not to exceed; that line, he was glad to say, was drawn; in worshipping God according to their conscience, they had no grievance to state; but they complained of the restriction from being enabled to fill certain offices. "If," continued Lord North, "there remains any thing which can operate as a burthen on any man's conscience, in the name of heaven let it be done away; but let not the admitting of persons of particular persuasions into offices of state be confounded with the restriction of conscience. If the Dissenters claim it as their undoubted natural right, to be rendered capable of enjoying offices, the argument may extend to all men. We are told that other countries have no test acts, and yet their established churches are not endangered. France has Protestants at the head of her army and her finances; and Prussia employs Catholics in her service; but it must be considered that those are arbitrary governments, that the King alone is to be served, and can at pleasure remove or advance whom he will. Holland admits men of all religions into her army, because, not

“ having sufficient subjects of her own, she is obliged to have recourse to foreign troops ; but there is no place where they restrain their civil officers more to the established principles of the country. The same may be said of Sweden.” It had been urged that, by the Corporation and Test Acts, any man who refused submission was subject to the same punishment with those convicted of great and heinous crimes ; but, in fact, no man was punished because he refused the sacrament of the Lord’s supper ; it was he only who filled an office in wilful violation of an act of the legislature. Having taken a view of the history of the two statutes, his lordship noticed the argument of the clergy being obliged to admit unworthy persons to the holy communion. The clerical body was not desirous that the test should be repealed. They could still, as formerly, refuse the sacrament to any unworthy person ; and that such persons did sometimes receive it, was no more a reason for abolishing the test, than the frequency of perjury would be for the general abrogation of oaths. “ Though we owe much,” he continued, “ to the Brunswick line, for the blessings of liberty which we enjoy, much is also due to the church for promoting harmony by submission to government, and for its liberal principles. No complaint of ecclesiastical tyranny or church persecution is preferred ; let us not confound toleration of religious principles with civil and military appointments. Universal toleration is established ; let us then be upon our guard against any innovation on the church ; the constitution is always in danger when the church is deprived of its rights.”

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Lord Beauchamp, Mr. William Smith, and Sir James Johnstone, shortly supported the motion ; and Mr. Pitt, with great moderation, opposed it. He spoke in high terms of the manner in which the debate had been conducted by the honourable mover and the noble Lord. There must, he observed, be restriction of rights in all societies ; all the modes of representation must include or render necessary some mode of qualification. “ Is a man,” he said, “ to be considered

Mr. Pitt.

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LX.

17-7.

“ as marked with infamy, because he does not vote for “ a city, a county, or a borough ? ” The members of the church of England, a part of our constitution, would be seriously injured by the effect of the motion ; and their apprehensions were not to be treated lightly. An established church was necessary ; provision for the ministers was of the essence of church government ; but the effect of the proposed measure, notwithstanding protestations to the contrary, would be to destroy such a provision. Dissenters considered the church of England a relic of Popery ; others deemed all establishments improper. These might not be the opinions of the present body of Dissenters ; but no means could be devised for admitting the moderate and excluding the violent ; the bulwark must be kept against all, by every prudent and proper precaution. He did justice to the character and temper of the present race of Dissenters ; they were intitled to the protection of Government, in the enjoyment of every mental privilege, of perfect toleration, and of complete religious freedom ; and all these they possessed in the most ample degree.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox said, that however much he might, of late, have incurred the odium of coalition, yet, if he had heard only one part of Mr. Pitt's argument, he should have found himself in a coalition with him. He agreed in the propriety of shutting out all Dissenters who would not allow that any establishment was necessary ; but he would not carry the argument against all indiscriminately. The general conduct of the Dissenters was praiseworthy ; and, in all former times, they had been actuated by principles of liberty, not inconsistent with the well-being of the state. The argument that there must be one establishment was absurd ; two establishments might exist in one government ; they actually did exist ; and he instanced the church of England and the kirk of Scotland. From the conduct of the Dissenters toward himself on a late occasion, the House would at least do him the justice to say, that, in supporting them, he was not influenced by any very obvious motives of private partiality or

attachment: yet he was determined to let them know, that, although they could on some occasions lose sight of their principles of liberty, he would not on any occasion lose sight of his principles of toleration. If there could be any modification of the penalties without repealing much of the act, it might be matter of instruction to the Committee, and perhaps would prove palatable to the House; yet, as the matter stood at present, the right honourable gentleman opposing the motion might be said to disclaim persecution in words, while he admitted its whole extent in principle.

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After a short explanation between Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, Sir William Dolben closed the debate. He objected to the character of moderation which had been given to the Dissenters, and, adverting to a pamphlet which Mr. Pitt had mentioned with approbation, he quoted a passage, in which the writer said that their silent propagation of the truth would, in the end, prove efficacious; for they were wisely placing, as it were, grain by grain, a train of gunpowder, to which the match would, one day, be laid, to blow up that fabric which never could be again raised upon the same foundation. Such were the doctrines which the Dissenters avowed; and therefore he called upon every man, who had any regard for the civil and religious rights of his country, to be cautious how he gave his vote for a question so pregnant with danger.

Sir William
Dolben.

On a division, the motion was lost*.

Motion lost.

The failure could excite no surprise. Mr. Beaufoy's speech, elaborate and able as it was, brought to light no fact whatever: it was alleged that Dissenters might suffer in various ways; but it was not pretended that, in the long period which had elapsed since the acts had passed, one single act of persecution or oppression had been recorded. The argument of tenderness toward clergy must have been urged in defiance of a thorough knowledge of their feelings; for, at the citation of the Archbishop of Canterbury, a meeting of the episcopal body had been held, for the purpose of

Observations.

Feb. 10.

* 178 to 190.

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imparting to Mr. Pitt the sentiments of that bench. The question submitted to them was, "Ought the "Test and Corporation Acts to be maintained?" Of fourteen prelates who were present, two only, Shipley, Bishop of St. Asaph, and Watson of Landaff, gave suffrages in the negative; and the decision, with the names of those who voted on each side, was transmitted to Mr. Pitt*, and of course not kept a secret from the other party.

Attempts to
improve the
condition of
criminals.

Regulations in
gaols.

In the course of this session, a measure was carried which materially affected the execution of the criminal law, and may, in its ultimate results, have considerable operation on the affairs and interests of the whole world. It may be fit to observe, that the attention of Government, invoked by the voice of humanity, and political good sense, had for some time been drawn to the condition and fate of malefactors. The prisons, which many authentic accounts describe as dens of vice, filth, and disease, had been subjected to visitation, restraint, and salutary improvement. If pure morals, undefiled conversation, and genuine piety, could not, by a sudden operation, be produced in the crowded receptacles of crime, some attention to decency and propriety was at least obtained, and the offices of religion were regularly and piously performed. If all the comforts of a well-regulated home could not be bestowed on criminals detained for trial or convicted of crime, cleanliness was established, health attended to, and all disease, particularly a most dangerous fever, which derived its name from the place where it was generated†, was, so far as human care could effect such a purpose, banished from the prisons.

Change of the
place of exe-
cution.

It had long been the custom to convey criminals, doomed to death, from Newgate to Tyburn, at the furthest extremity of Oxford Road. Huddled together in carts, these miserable individuals made thus a journey of more than two miles, through the most busy thoroughfares of the metropolis. How inconvenient

* Anecdotes of the Life of Richard Watson, Bishop of Landaff, vol. i. p. 261, 8vo.

† The Gaol Distemper.

this was to the inhabitants of those streets it is needless to describe; the shops were kept shut until an hour unusually late; and, on many occasions, immense mobs were collected, carrying, through their whole progress, mischief, violence, and rapine. If a feeling of repentance had been implanted in the breast of the criminal, the view, the shouts, the ribaldry of his former associates, who beset him on his way, were eminently calculated to blight it; and most frequently the culprit himself made it a duty to banish fear and prudence from the bosoms of spectators, by the display of a reckless hardihood, an undaunted indifference to his fate, which removed him from the shameful condition of a criminal, and elevated him, for a time at least, to the rank of a popular hero. During the coalition administration*, this dreadful nuisance was abolished. By an easy and effectual contrivance, the victim of the law passed only through some inner apartments to a temporary building erected in the front of the prison, where, after receiving from the ordinary, or a priest of his own persuasion, the last consolation which piety can bestow in this world, he was expelled from it, according to his sentence†.

Since the separation of the American colonies, a difficulty had existed with respect to the destination of the criminals sentenced to transportation. The number of convicts thus circumstanced had frightfully accumulated, and intentions were entertained of conveying them to an island in the Gambia, on the eastern coast of Africa. This dedication of them to certain death, when the law had not awarded such a punishment, was strongly censured, and easily abandoned, and an unexceptionable regulation was adopted in the

Transportation
to New South
Wales.

* In December, 1783.

† It might be supposed that this regulation could not be disapproved by any considerate individual. Some did censure it; and one in particular, most eminent, learned, and pious, Dr. Johnson, objected, in the first place, to the fury of innovation, from which Tyburn itself was no longer safe; and next, that if an execution ceased to draw spectators, it failed in its purpose; the solemn procession, he added, was equally of use to the criminal and the public; and his biographer intimated, that, in their approval of this morality, magistrates were actuated by a regard for their own ease. Boswell's Life of Johnson, vol. iv. p. 204, 8vo. ed. 1816; vol. viii. p. 179, ed. 1835. Mr. Horne Tooke also expressed disapprobation, but on grounds entirely different.

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course of the session. Among the discoveries of that justly celebrated navigator, Captain Cook, may be reckoned the extensive territory called Australasia, or New South Wales. That Captain Cook was the first European who had descried this new region, cannot be averred: the Dutch had made ineffectual voyages, given names to some portions, and laid down its locality in an obscure manner, in some of their unpublished maps; but they were characteristically parsimonious, even in communication; and, deriving no aid from them or from their disclosures, the whole merit of discovery lies with the adventurous Englishman*.

This land had been to a certain degree explored, and its capacity to afford copious means of subsistence fully ascertained, when it was resolved to make it the habitation of transported convicts. The mode of punishment had been very inconveniently conducted, under an act of Parliament, which authorized the Crown to send offenders to any part of the British dominions beyond sea, and assign them, for the period of their punishment, to any who would employ them†: but the evils of this system were soon felt, and an order in council was made, in virtue of which the eastern part of the coast of New South Wales was to be their destination. It was, of course, necessary to establish a civil authority and form of government, sufficient for the punishment of crimes and the protection of society. The statute, which enabled his Majesty, by commission under the great seal, to establish such a government, passed without notice‡ or debate, and the public hailed the change as useful and humane§. Captain Arthur Phillip, of the navy, who was appointed governor, with proper subordinate officers, and a body of marines, sailed in a ship of war, with a tender and nine transports and store ships, carrying six hundred male and two hundred and fifty female convicts, des-

* See Historical, Political, and Moral Essay on Revolutions, by Chateaubriand, p. 133. See also Cook's Voyages; and Pinkerton's Collection of Voyages, vol. ii. p. 121.

† 24 George III. c. 56.

‡ 27 George III. c. 2.

§ Macpherson's Annals of Commerce, vol. iv. p. 132.

1786.

Dec. 6.

tined to be the original founders of the projected colony, together with an amply supply of provisions, plantation tools, and stores of every kind for their comfortable settlement*.

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At the close of this session, the Speaker enumerated to the King several of the measures which had engaged attention; particularly the promising state of the finances, and the aid which had been granted to the Prince of Wales. The King acknowledged, with thanks, the liberality of Parliament; but his speech contained no matter that could be considered new or striking, except an allusion to troubles prevailing in Holland, at which, as a friend and well-wisher to the Republic, he expressed real concern.

May 30.
Close of the
session.

* Accounts of this Voyage were published by Governor Phillip, Captain Hunter, John White, Esq. Surgeon-general, and some others. The narrations are all interesting, and, for information in natural history and other particulars, very valuable. It is worthy of remark, that this voyage, which then occupied more than ten months, can now be accomplished in four.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FIRST.

1784—1787.

Affairs of India.—Efforts to restore order.—Mr. Hastings goes to Lucknow—wretched condition of the country.—State of Shah Allum.—Mr. Hastings retires from the government. Succeeded by Mr. Macpherson.—Meeting at Calcutta on Mr. Pitt's act.—Petitions against the new judicature.—The government offered to Lord Macartney.—Lord Cornwallis appointed.—Motion in Parliament to amend Mr. Pitt's act—opposed by Mr. Dundas—and lost.—Mr. Dundas brings in a bill—observations of Mr. Burke.—Amendment moved by Mr. Sheridan to divide the bill into two—adopted.—Debates in the Lords—the bills passed.—Lord Cornwallis goes to India.—Debts of the Nabob of Arcot—directed to be paid without deduction.—Mr. Fox's motion on the subject—celebrated speech of Mr. Burke.—Motions in the House of Lords.—Departure of Mr. Hastings from India—honours paid him—he writes a narrative.—Opinions respecting him pronounced in Parliament—at the India House. Mr. Burke's motion respecting Almas Ali Khan.—Papers moved for by Mr. Francis.—Mr. Burke moves for papers preparatory to his charges against Mr. Hastings—observations of several members—papers granted.—Mr. Burke proposes to examine witnesses at the bar—produces twenty-two charges.—Copies allowed to Mr. Hastings.—His answer to the charges—witnesses examined.—Mr. Burke moves the first charge—which is rejected.—Mr. Fox moves the second.—Mr. Pitt declares in favour of the motion—impeachment voted.—Oude charges.—Mr. Sheridan's celebrated speech.—Impeachment on this charge voted.—Further proceedings.—Other charges moved by other members.—Proceedings reported—Committee ap-

pointed to frame charges.—Impeachment prosecuted at the bar of the House of Lords by Mr. Burke.—Mr. Hastings held to bail.—Observations on the conduct of Mr. Pitt.—Situation of Mr. Francis.—Motion for impeaching Sir Elijah Impey.—He defends himself.—Motion rejected.

PUBLIC attention was powerfully attracted, during the last few years, to the affairs of India; the earnestness with which they were debated in Parliament having added much to the interest, which, from their intrinsic importance, they were calculated to create.

When peace with Tippoo had restored tranquillity to the British possessions, the first care of the Governor-general was to resume the operations which had been suspended; to reanimate industry, and revive prosperity. The state of Oude, in particular, called for attention; daily robberies and murders were perpetrated; no regular courts of justice had been established; the attempt which had been made to form a police was unsuccessful, the office of its chief had fallen into contempt; the subordinate functionaries were destitute of pay; and plunder and assassination raged without controul*.

Invested by the Council with full powers to remove abuses and redress grievances, Mr. Hastings proceeded to Lucknow, where he found the reality far more distressing than even the gloomy picture which had induced him to undertake the journey. A bad season, occasioned by the failure of the periodical rains, had exhausted the country; the beds of rivers sent forth clouds of dust; the roots of the former herbage were dried up, and the only relief from this general desolation was, where fields of grain, irrigated by means of incessant labour, presented a view of present verdure, and a hope of future supply. But, although the pressure of misery occasioned many complaints, Mr. Hastings felt no alarm for the future: relying on the gratitude and unbounded confidence of the Nabob, he

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LXI.

1784.
Affairs of
India.

Efforts to re-
store order.

Mr. Hastings
goes to
Lucknow.
1784.
Feb. 14.

Wretched
condition of
the country.

* Proceedings, &c. against Warren Hastings, Esq. vol. i. p. 344.

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LXI.

1784.

11th April.
State of Shah
Allum.

anticipated success as the final result of his measures. He continued engaged in operations of finance, retrenchment, and regulation*, when his attention was arrested by what he termed "an uncommon phenomenon." This was, the appearance at Lucknow of the prince Jewan Buklit, eldest son of Shah Allum, and who had held the most active post in the small remainder of his administration. He had lived at Delhi in a state of comparative affluence, and even splendour; but the condition of his father, who was, in fact, a captive, the passive instrument by which the will of others acquired the stamp of authority, although entirely repugnant to his own, and who was kept in a state of abject penury, impelled this virtuous prince to give up the comforts of his own station, and, by escaping clandestinely, to incur the dangers attending a recapture, that he might solicit the intervention of the Nabob Vizier and the English government. He obtained an interview with the Governor-general; but the state of the finances, the necessity of repose, and the other usual apologies for withholding succour, were alleged, and the Prince gained no benefit to his father by his generous effort†. Shah Allum was, in fact, a person to whom no beneficial aid could be effectually extended: apathy and indolence made him incapable of retrieving his affairs; his mind fluctuated between occasional bursts of obstinate and immovable self-will, and an implicit and helpless submission to the dictates of others; a temper which can neither conciliate affection, nor enforce respect. Had he been differently constituted, he might have risen high among the powers of India. His name, his family, assured a certain degree of estimation, and his rights were acknowledged by all, although none espoused them. Of three persons who had lately assumed the administration of his affairs, two had been assassinated, and his total subjection was completed by Madajee Scindiah, who obtained for the Peishwa the royal grant (for the degraded monarch

* Letter from Warren Hastings, Esq. to the Court of Directors, dated 30th April, 1784.

† See Papers on the Trial of Warren Hastings, vol. ii. p. 1234 to 1252.

was still made to execute powers injurious to himself) of the office of Wakeel Muttaluk, a dignity of special appointment, and rarely known in the annals of the house of Timour*.

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1784.

Soon after the return of the Governor-general to Calcutta, his authority terminated. A year and eight months had elapsed since he had written to the Court of Directors, tendering his resignation, leaving a sufficient interval for the appointment of a successor†; but to this intimation no attention was paid. About the time of his departure for Lucknow, a rumour was circulated from Madras that he had been dismissed with disgrace; but time dispelled the illusion. Mr. Hastings himself again wrote to the Directors, reminding them of his former application, and announcing his resolution to quit the government in the following spring. Until his final departure, he employed himself in giving effect to the regulations and plans he had previously devised‡.

Nov. 4th.
Mr. Hastings
retires from
his govern-
ment.

Nov. 22.

1785.
Feb. 8.

As senior member of the council, and not by any express appointment, Mr. Macpherson, succeeded to the vacated chair. The brief period of his government affords no event of a striking historical character; his attention was chiefly directed to the improvement of finance, an operation for which he was well qualified by the experience gained in an administration of nineteen years. His government was expected to be short; but it was protracted by occurrences both in India and at home. At the time of Mr. Hastings's departure for Lucknow, the existence of Mr. Fox's India bill was not known. Intelligence of the changes intended by it was speedily succeeded by Mr. Pitt's act; a measure which, although generally considered beneficial, was, in one respect, the cause of great dissatisfaction. The clause for establishing a new and unheard-of tribunal in England, for the trial of offences committed in India, appeared peculiarly oppressive; and the Sheriff of Calcutta, on the requisition

Succeeded by
Mr. Macpher-
son.

Meetings in
Calcutta on
Mr. Pitt's act.

July 25,

* Hastings's Review of the State of Bengal, p. 96.

† 20th March, 1783.

‡ See Review of the State of Bengal, p. i.—Mill, vol. iv p. 411.

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LXI.

1785.
Petitions
against the
new judica-
ture.
Sept. 19.

The govern-
ment proposed
to Lord
Macartney.

1786.
Jan. 9-13.

17th Feb.

Lord Corn-
wallis ap-
pointed.

tion of the grand jury, convened a meeting, at which very animated speeches were made, and resolutions passed, expressing disapprobation of that clause, and also of that which required individuals returning from India to deliver, on oath, an inventory of their whole property. Several minor details were objected to, a committee appointed, and petitions prepared to the King and both Houses of Parliament. With equal promptitude and unanimity, similar proceedings were taken at Madras*.

The appointment of a new Governor-general was much agitated, both at the Board of Control and in Leadenhall Street. Lord Macartney, having arrived in England, was early applied to, and detailed to the chairman and deputy-chairman of the Directors the principles and regulations to be established before he would accept the office. These were, principally, such support from government as would ensure the subordination of the military to the civil department; a power of promoting and removing the civil servants of the Company, according to his discretion; and a power to act independently of his council: these were not objected to by the ministry. The opposition expressed great confidence in him; and all parties concurred in applauding his conduct as Governor of Madras; but yet the appointment, which appeared so certain, did not take place. His lordship had an interview with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas, at which his proposals were, on the whole, approved; although it was said that they could not all be carried immediately into execution; and he required, as a protection against that hostility which he apprehended from some persons in India, a distinguished mark of his Majesty's favour, meaning an English peerage. On the whole, he thought that, although disposed to enter into his views, the minister found a difficulty in assenting to all his proposals; and therefore he was as little

* See a pamphlet printed at Calcutta, and reprinted in London, called, "The whole Proceedings of the Meeting held at the Theatre in Calcutta," &c. &c. And one intitled "Resolutions of the Madras Committee," &c.

surprised as he was displeased, at learning, three days afterward, that Lord Cornwallis was appointed*.

Mr. Francis moved for leave to bring in a bill to explain and amend Mr. Pitt's act, proposed; several important changes both at home and abroad, and inveighed with great strength of reasoning against the tyranny of the inventory on oath required by the statute; a regulation, he said, which would often be injurious, in proportion to the innocence of the parties. With equal force and justice he arraigned, as unconstitutional and unjust, the new tribunal and mode of trial created by the act; and shewed, in many instances, how oppressive its regulations necessarily must prove. He also proposed to abridge the powers confided to the Governor-general. Mr. Windham seconded the motion.

Mr. Dundas contended, and perhaps rightly, that the trial by jury would be ineffectual and inapplicable; but when he relied on the rank and character of the persons who would compose the court, as forming a guarantee for its justice and temperance, he said no more than had formerly been most truly advanced in fact, although most falsely in its application, for the Star Chamber Court and the High Commission. Equally fallacious was the reasoning by which he justified the admission of documentary evidence; the contents were not to be taken for granted, but to be explained, investigated, and impugned; but if the libels of an enemy, the admissions of a party not authorized to make them, or the confident declarations of very honourable persons, who assume facts upon the relation of others, and without any personal knowledge, can once be received in a court of justice in quality of evidence, the defence of a person accused must rest on grounds extremely feeble and uncertain, and the most wholesome principles of justice must be violated. With much better success, he vindicated the powers given to the Governor-general, and shewed, that, far from being retrenched, the public good required that

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LXI.

1785.
7th March.
Motion in
Parliament to
amend Mr.
Pitt's act.

Opposed by
Mr. Dundas.

* Barrow's Life of Lord Macartney, vol. i. p. 316, et seqq.

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LXI.

1785.

they should be augmented. The declaration of property, he said, had been lately under consideration, and ministers intended to submit the matter to Parliament.

Motion lost.

After a few more observations from Mr. Anstruther, Major Scott, and several other members, the motion was lost without a division.

16th March.
Mr. Dundas
brings in a
bill.

In a few days, Mr. Dundas obtained leave to bring in a bill with nearly the same title as that proposed by Mr. Francis. The alterations were, first, that persons who had served the Company at home, should be eligible members of the council, as well as those who had served in India; second, that, instead of all measures being decided by the majority of the council, the Governor-general should be empowered to adopt such as he might think proper, whether the council agreed with him or not; third, that the Governor might, in case of death, nominate new members of the council-board; and the Directors were to determine whether the Commander-in-Chief should have a seat or not; and fourth, the mode of succeeding to offices by gradation was to be qualified. The manner of accounting for property acquired, and of trying offences, was also to be considerably altered. No opposition was made to the motion, but Mr. Francis requiring that it should be an instruction, in preparing the bill, that no part of the present law should be confirmed, by which the inalienable birth-right of every British subject to a trial by jury, as declared by Magna Charta, should be taken away or impaired; his motion was negatived on a division*.

22nd.

Debate in the
committee.

In the committee, the clauses were warmly debated, principally by the members of opposition. The silence of the ministerial party called forth animadversions from Sir James Erskine, and a thundering philippic from Mr. Burke, who, in his own peculiar manner, said, of the India bills brought in by ministers, that profligacy had first cried out, "Give me despotism;" but hypocrisy, more artful and wily, said, "No, let us come

Speech of
Mr. Burke.

“ upon them by degrees, and then they will submit to “ what would have frightened them at first ;” and so an abortion of tyranny, like an imperfect fœtus in a bottle, was produced and handed about as a shew ; at length, the child’s navel-strings broke, and a full-grown monster of tyranny, the bill upon the table, was brought forth. To administer arbitrary power as a cure for the ills of India, was like that man who said he could apply one short and immediate remedy for the various diseases of the human body—poison. Several other members spoke with considerable warmth ; but, after a short reply from Mr. Pitt, the House divided on an amendment, which was negatived*.

A division had taken place on another clause†, when Mr. Sheridan observed that the bill consisted of two parts ; the first relating to the regulations of the government of India, the second to the new court of judicature to be instituted at home. These distinct objects should be separately considered ; and, as administration had probably made it a condition with Earl Cornwallis that he should go to Bengal invested with certain powers, they might desire to pass that portion of the bill as soon as possible : the same necessity for dispatch did not apply to the clauses on the judicature ; and, as they had been but little considered when the India bill passed, he wished to divide that before the House, and separate the two subjects ; thus enabling ministers to keep faith with the Governor-general, and affording the House the necessary time for discussion. This temperate and well-considered proposition was acceded to without an objection, and the first bill was speedily transmitted to the Lords, where, after one unimportant debate, it passed without a division.

The other bill encountered no opposition in the lower House : in the Lords, the Earl of Carlisle moved an amendment ; and, in the debate, ministers were accused of a systematic design to destroy the trial by jury, a charge which they indignantly denied. Lord

CHAP.
LXI.

1785.

Amendment
moved by
Mr. Sheridan.
24th.

Agreed to.

27th.

The bills pass
the Commons.

Debated in
the Lords.

June 14th.

* 151 to 65.

† 125 to 36.

CHAP.
LXI.

1785.

Observations
of Earl
Camden.Of Lord
Lough-
borough.

Bill passed.

Lord Corn-
wallis goes
to India.Debts of the
Nabob of
Arcot.

Camden declared that, if he were to be tried for his life as an Indian delinquent, he would prefer a court constituted like that now proposed to any tribunal in existence. Instead of having neither judge nor jury, it had the benefit of both, so happily blended, that the judges became (what they had never been before) jurors. Lord Loughborough, on the contrary, treated the bill as utterly unnecessary; the law, as it stood, was sufficient to meet every species of delinquency; and, as a proof, he cited the case of Stratton, Floyer, and others, which he, as Attorney-general, had prosecuted with complete success, and in which, it was needless to say, that no evidence was omitted that could have availed the defendants, for Mr. Dunning was his opponent. The amendment was negatived*; the bill passed with some alterations which were assented to by the other House.

Thus Lord Cornwallis proceeded to the government of India, invested with powers which assured a proper and necessary control. He was the bearer of a boon which the British residents had so earnestly solicited, which emancipated them from the insufferable oppression of giving, on oath, an inventory of their property, and which mitigated at least, if it did not wholly destroy, a tribunal which they beheld with fear and abhorrence. He was also relieved from the embarrassments and disputes which probably would have arisen with a native power, by the adjustment of certain claims made by British subjects upon Mahomed Ally, the Nabob of Arcot. These demands, some of which had been accumulating during twenty years†, were taken, including compound interest at 2,945,600 pounds sterling. They had always been the subject of suspicion and inquiry, and, on bringing into Parliament the several bills of Mr. Dundas, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, an investigation had always been declared necessary. The last in particular enacted that the Court of Directors should take these claims into consideration, and order their presidencies and

* 39 to 9.

† From 1765.

servants abroad to make a complete investigation, and supply the necessary information for establishing, in concert with the Nabob, a fund for the discharge of those which were justly due.

The Directors had endeavoured to trace the origin of the greater portion of the debt, but without success. They ordered the President and Council of Madras to enter fully into the examination; but their letter was so altered by the Board of Control as to render further inquiry impossible. The Nabob's liabilities, divided into three classes, were all directed to be paid without diminution or inquiry as to the principal, in which was necessarily included the arrears of compound interest; and the whole amount, although created at different periods of time, and rates of interest, was made a charge on the revenues of the Carnatic. The Directors remonstrated, in humble terms and powerful reasonings, against this hasty and injurious decision, but in vain.

A proceeding so apparently adverse to the plain sense of the very recent act of Parliament did not escape without animadversion. Mr. Fox, after a luminous statement of the facts, moved for certain letters and papers relative to this transaction. His motion was seconded by Mr. Francis, and supported by Mr. Smith, the chairman of the East India Company, and by Sir Thomas Rumbold. The only defender of the measure was Mr. Dundas, who contended that, as the statute directed that the Court of Directors should take into consideration the origin and justice of the demands on the Nabob, so far as the materials in their possession should enable them, and, as the letters and correspondence in their books, and a variety of other data, afforded as full information as could be required, the Board of Control had done their duty in deciding without seeking for more. He viewed the debts in their different classes, and vindicated the direction for paying them.

Mr. Burke adorned the debate with one of his most lofty and powerful effusions of eloquence. He analyzed Mr. Dundas's speech with great severity, shewed the origin of the debts to be in a great measure scan-

CHAP.
LXI.

1785.

Directed to be paid without deduction.

Mr. Fox's motion on the subject.

February 25.

Opposed by Mr. Dundas.

Mr. Burke's celebrated speech.

CHAP.
LXI.

1785.

dalously fraudulent, or fictitiously contrived for the benefit of individual claimants, whose demerits, particularly those of Mr. Paul Benfield, he exhibited in glowing colours. He treated the proposed mode of extinguishing these demands as a shameless scheme for securing Parliamentary support, by throwing into the possession of this Mr. Benfield a capital of five hundred and ninety-two thousand pounds, or an income of thirty-five thousand five hundred and twenty pounds, charged on the public revenues.

It is impossible, by any extract or analysis, to convey an adequate notion of the oratorical beauty and argumentative force of this oration; whether it were unanswerable or not cannot be told, for, when several members rose at its conclusion to address the chair, a general call for the question prevented their being heard; and, on a division, Mr. Fox's motion was negatived by a large majority*.

18th Feb. and
1st. March.
Motions in the
House of
Lords.

In the House of Lords, the subject was twice agitated, in consequence of motions by the Earl of Carlisle; but, as the debates produced nothing of novelty or peculiar interest, it may suffice to say that a division, on the latter day, was no more prosperous to the Earl than it had been to the illustrious commoner†.

Departure of
Mr. Hastings
from India.

From Lord Cornwallis, deputed, in times of peace and ease, with powers so ample, and means of conciliation so abundant, we turn our eyes to Mr. Hastings, leaving the scene of his disputed and controlled authority, to encounter in his native land such vexations as had never before been the lot of any man. His departure was marked with more than usual testimonies of regret. Not only the constituted authorities, judicial, civil, and military, presented warm and even enthusiastic addresses; not only did the natives of superior class follow the example, decorating their valedictions with all the gorgeous flowers of eastern adulation, but

* 164 to 69. Mr. Burke afterwards printed his speech, with an introduction and an appendix, from which much of the preceding narrative has been derived. They are re-printed in his works, 8vo. edition, vol. iv. p. 183, and with the advertisement, but without the Appendix, in Hansard's Debates, vol. xxv. p. 182. See also Mills' History of India, vol. v. p. 18.

† 78 to 24

those of an inferior description attended his embarkation with yells and tears; and some precipitated themselves into the waves to view, for the last time, the features they had so long respected, or even to touch the bark which was to convey him from their shores. But if these demonstrations were calculated to produce a brief illusion, it soon vanished in the sober solitude of a long voyage. Mr. Hastings well knew the party that was raised, and the efforts which had been made to injure him at home; and, in anticipation of what he might have to encounter, he employed a portion of his leisure in composing a statement of some of his later transactions, which was afterward committed to the press*.

CHAP.
LXI.
1781.

He writes a narrative.

In Parliament, his conduct had so long been the subject of severe animadversion, that he could not be uninformed of the spirit which actuated a considerable portion of the members. The reports of the committees have already been mentioned; and it is only necessary to add, that every opportunity of heaping censure on him had long been seized with the utmost eagerness. For example; although Mr. Fox, when he introduced his India bills, strongly deprecated such discussions†, several members of his party launched their censures against the Governor-general, and pursued them as if the fate of the proposed statute depended entirely on his character. At the India House, the opinions of the Court of Proprietors had been always, those of the Court of Directors generally, favourable to Mr. Hastings. From the time of Mr. Dundas's motion for his removal‡, until the introduction of Mr. Fox's bill, the Courts had expressed approbation; and, on the last occasion, resolutions were moved, declaring those opinions, in the strongest terms, to be the sentiments of the Proprietors, and requesting the Governor-general not to resign. The Court was very full, comprising several high and illustrious characters; and

Opinions expressed in Parliament.

By the Proprietors and Directors.

7th Nov. 1783.

* It appeared early in 1786, and is said, by Mr Gleig, vol. iii. p. 317, to have been published through the dishonesty of a mercenary stationer.

† See Chapter 51.

‡ 28th May, 1782

CHAP.
LXI.

1784.

30th July.
Mr. Burke's
motion re-
specting Almas
Ali Khan.

the resolutions were carried with only one dissentient voice*.

Mr. Burke made the first direct Parliamentary attack on the retiring Governor, moving for copies of all letters, instructions, or minutes, relative to the seizure and putting to death of a native of India, named Almas Ali Khan. His speech was a specimen of the style of invective which, so long afterward, resounded in Parliament. "The situation and property of the "unfortunate Almas had attracted the attention, stimulated the avarice, and brought down the vengeance "of the British on his head. The crime of having "money, like the sin against the Holy Ghost in "Christian theology, in Indian politics, could never "be forgiven. It seemed impossible, in this instance, "to plunder without murder. Orders had been sent "to arrest Almas; but this gentleman-like business "must be done in the most gentleman-like manner. "The chief must be taken, and he must also be 'put "to death;' but all this must be so contrived as to "imply 'no treachery.' Here was honour of a very "singular and nice description—plunder, speculation, "and even assassination, without treachery! This, "however, was only one instance of many. Almost "every district in India daily exhibited marks or specimens of the same inhumanity, and disclosed scenes "of misery and degradation. Nor did the Company "gain advantage from these horrible iniquities. The "revenues decreased in proportion as the violence and "force, employed in collecting them, augmented. This "country, before the dirty and miserable interference of "English politics, was plentiful, so well cultivated, and "so rich, as to deserve the name of the Eden of the East. "There was nothing like its fertility and luxuriance "where we exist. It exhibited to Europeans a new "spectacle of Nature, putting forth all her strength. "But where now was this beautiful paradise? It was "no where to be found. This delightful spot, the "joint effect of nature and art, the united work of

* Proceedings at a General Court of Proprietors, &c. Debrett 1783.

“ God and man, was no more. The country was extirpated. Haman Dowlah (the well-known appellation, Mr. Hastings in India) had reduced the whole to a waste, howling desert, where no human creature could exist.”

CHAP.
LXI.

1784.

In the course of this speech Mr. Burke challenged those whom he termed the Indian bench, superior to the treasury bench, the abettors of these crimes, to contradict any of his assertions; and, as he named Major Scott, the avowed agent of Mr. Hastings, as one of that description, that member, after shortly contradicting some statements and explaining others, seconded Mr. Burke's motion, which, after another vehement speech from the mover, was granted. Other papers were accorded with equal facility; but when the eloquent mover required an account of the produce of jewels and other effects of the mother and grandmother of the Soubah of Oude, Mr. Pitt found it necessary to interpose, observing that the House could not know as a fact that any jewels or effects had been obtained from these princesses; there would be no end if papers were to be ordered without the establishment of any parliamentary ground. Mr. Burke made a vehement reply, fraught with bitter reproaches against some young members, who appeared to laugh at some passages in his speech; but the House, adopting Mr. Pitt's motion, passed to the order of the day.

Major Scott.

Papers
granted.

Others
refused.

In the ensuing session, Mr. Francis moved for papers from the India House, relative to salaries, emoluments, and revenues in India, which, with some slight exceptions, were granted; but, on a subsequent day, when he asked for a letter written by Mr. Hastings to the East India Company, his motion was lost on a division*. The debates on these occasions are utterly void of interest; they abound in acrimonious personalities from members to each other; but the accusers of Mr. Hastings did not, on these occasions, rage against him with their former unmitigated violence.

1785.

Feb. 16th.
Other papers
moved for by
Mr. Francis.
24th.

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.
Feb. 17th.
Mr. Burke
moves for
papers pre-
paratory to his
charges against
Mr Hastings.

Another year elapsed before charges were in a formal manner moved; but, from that time, the task proceeded without intermission. Mr. Burke then assumed the position of accuser; and, having caused resolutions formerly passed* to be read as the ground of his proceeding, introduced to the House what he justly termed the solemn and important business of the day. He traced, in a clear and perspicuous manner, the rise of our power in India, the settlement effected by Lord Clive; the enormous abuses which, in consequence of the facility afforded to the sudden acquisition of wealth, were piled on each other, until every spot of British territory in India became a shocking theatre of that variety of crimes to which the lust of avarice and ambition so frequently impels the worthless part of human kind. Such were the circumstances when Mr. Hastings was removed from Madras to Bengal; but still the state of affairs required scrutiny; and he mentioned the operations of the different committees, until the reports were delivered which occasioned the resolutions he had caused to be read. He reflected with great severity on Mr. Dundas, for having become so cold and indifferent on a subject in which he had before shewn so much spirit and eagerness; and complained bitterly of an expression used by Lord Thurlow, when he compared the reports to mere fables, and placed their authority no higher than that of the romance of Robinson Crusoe. In defiance of either the keen severity of raillery, at once unmerited and groundless, or the imposing plausibility of an insidious style of argument, he should rest his own particular accusation against Mr. Hastings as a delinquent of the first magnitude, upon the united authority of the heavy charges arising out of the reports, and of the string of resolutions remaining on the Journals.

Three modes of proceeding presented themselves: a criminal information to be filed in the Court of King's Bench by the Attorney-general, a bill of pains

* In May, 1782.

and penalties, and a parliamentary impeachment. From the first he was averse, because the Attorney-general* did not discover any zealous inclination to support the measure; nor did he conceive that a trial by jury was, of all others, the most unexceptionable and best devised for obtaining ample justice against an offender so great and elevated; nor could a prosecution so important, and necessarily of such long duration, be carried on in the Court of King's Bench, without overwhelming all other causes. A bill of pains and penalties would press, with the severity of injustice, on the party prosecuted, and tarnish the character and dignity of the House; as its members would thus present themselves at one moment as accusers, and at another as judges; where the accused must state the grounds of his defence, and witnesses produced, who could not be examined on oath, but who must yet, before another assembly, be subjected to that test. He therefore gave the preference to an impeachment, but would not pursue the accustomed course of first moving the impeachment and then for a committee, who should discover and arrange the articles: he would only move for papers, from the contents of which he would endeavour to collect the facts into their necessary points of view; and when these should, in the contemplation of the House, appear to be charges of an atrocious nature, he would propose an impeachment. In conclusion, he moved for all correspondence since January, 1782, between Mr. Hastings and the Court of Directors, as well before as since his return, relative to presents and other money privately received by him. Mr. Windham seconded the motion.

Mr. Dundas jocularly observed, that, from some passages in the mover's speech, he was led to congratulate himself that he was not the person to be impeached. He denied that he had ever dropped a hint from which it could be inferred that he would be an accuser of Mr. Hastings; nor did the resolutions

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.

Mr. Dundas.

* Sir Richard Pepper Arden.

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.
Mr. Fox.

which had been adverted to, charge on him any criminality.

These observations called up Mr. Fox, who exposed, with great vehemence, what he considered the inconsistency of the Lord Advocate; and alluded particularly to the extermination of the Rohillas, and taking from the Mogul the provinces secured by the treaty of Poorunder.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt treated as extraordinary the language used by Mr. Fox. He excused Mr. Hastings as to several of the points of charge intimated against him; extermination of the Rohillas was a mere word, unattended with any act; and, with respect to the breach of the treaty of Poorunder, by seizing the provinces of Corah and Allahabad, he observed, that after that transaction, Mr. Hastings had been named by act of Parliament, instead of President of the Council of Bengal, Governor-general of all the settlements.

Other mem-
bers.

Papers
granted.

Other members spoke in defence of Mr. Hastings and in justification of Mr. Dundas, particularly Mr. Rous, Mr. Vansittart, and Major Scott; while on the other side appeared Mr. Francis, and Lord North. The papers were granted without opposition; as were, on subsequent motions, several others, relating to presents and payments, and the correspondence with Mr. Hastings on the removal of Mr. John Bristow*; but when Mr. Burke proceeded to require copies of all other correspondence during the residence of Mr. Bristow in the province of Oude, with documents, answers, and proceedings, a disposition to resistance was shewn by Mr. Pitt and Mr. Dundas; a debate was prevented by the Speaker's illness, which occasioned an adjournment, and at the next meeting of the House the motion was withdrawn.

20th.

Other papers
demanded

Mr. Burke having demanded some other papers relative to transactions in Oude, Mr. Dundas made some opposition, and the debate which ensued before they were granted is chiefly remarkable for the observations of Mr. Pitt, who, having congratulated the

Mr. Pitt's
declaration of
impartiality.

* They were the subject of eight motions, for which, see Journals, vol. xli. p. 216.

House on the apparent moderation shewn by those who forwarded the prosecution, a temperance which would greatly conduce to accelerate the investigation, declared that he was neither a determined friend nor foe to Mr. Hastings, but resolved to support the principles of justice and equity. If crimes of enormity were proved beyond a doubt, the character of that House, the reputation of the British name, the honour and dignity of the human species, called aloud for punishment; but Mr. Hastings, notwithstanding assertions to the contrary, might be perfectly innocent; the assertions on either part must be sustained by incontestible evidence.

It would be, at this time, equally tedious and useless to recapitulate the various motions for papers which were made, and, after animated discussions, rejected*. Mr. Burke, steadily pursuing his object, next proposed to call witnesses to the bar; but this was resisted, unless specific charges were first preferred, so that the House might judge whether the proposed evidence was, or was not, admissible or applicable. Yielding reluctantly to this objection, Mr. Burke produced twenty-two articles of charge, extending to a great length, and comprising a prodigious variety of matter†.

It was moved, on the petition of Mr. Hastings that he should be allowed copies, and be heard in his defence. To the latter part of the motion there was no opposition; but to the granting of copies, Sir

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.

Mr. Burke proposes to examine witnesses at the bar.

April 2.

4th, 12th, 26th, and 27th. Produces twenty-two charges.

Mr. Hastings applies for copies of the charges.

* See debates on the 3rd, 6th, and 17th of March.

† Their heads are, 1, The Rohilla War; 2, Shah Allum; 3, Benares, which branches out into five divisions; 4, Princes of Oude; 5, Revolution in Faruckabad; 6, destruction of the Rajah of Salone; 7, Contracts; 8, Presents; 9, Resignation of his office; 10, 11, 12, Contracts of different kinds, particularly opium; 13, Appointment of Richard Joseph Sullivan to be resident at Delhi; 14, Treaty with and conduct toward the Rama of Gohud; 15, Mismanagement of the Revenues; 16, Misdemeanours in Oude; 17, Arresting and displacing Mahomed Reza Khan; 18, The Mogul delivered up to the Mahrattas; 19, a libel on the Court of Directors in his narrative of transactions at Benares; 20, Mahratta war and peace; 21, Concealing from the Council and from the Court of Directors his correspondence with native princes and country powers; and 22, Treatment of Fyzoola Khan, Vizier of Rampore. See also the same matter in pamphlets, published respectively by Stockdale and Debrett. The twenty-second, or last charge, was not delivered until the fifth of May, after the defence of Mr. Hastings had been entered into. Journals, vol. xli. page 750 to 761.

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.
Application
opposed.

Grey Cooper, Mr. Burke, and Mr. Fox, made strong objections, as being contrary to precedent. Mr. Fox observed, that they were not articulated charges, but merely general collections of accusatory facts, out of which the real charges were to be extracted.

But acceded
to.

Mr. Pitt, on the other hand, maintained that it was necessary to give the required copy; for, without it, the party accused could not judge what to admit, what to deny, and what to justify; or, whether he might not demur altogether. The whole motion was granted; but when Mr. Burke, after presenting an article, moved that the Speaker should leave the chair, in order that the committee might proceed, it was insisted, and, after a long debate, carried, that Mr. Hastings should first be heard on the charges, as it was possible that he might convince the House that they were altogether unfounded or untenable.

1786.
May 1st
and 2nd.
Mr. Hastings's
answer.

Witnesses
examined.
2nd May 1786
to
30th March
1787.

At the day appointed, Mr. Hastings appeared at the bar, and delivered, from written minutes, his answer to the charges. He examined them separately, and reasoned upon the facts with great force, or denied them with much appearance of consistency*. Twenty witnesses were examined in support of the charges, an investigation which took up many days in two sessions of Parliament†.

1786.
Mr. Burke
moves the first
charge.

When these preliminaries had been gone through, Mr. Burke moved the first charge on the Rohilla war. He viewed the question as an appeal from British power to British justice. The matter must either be criminal, or a very false accusation: there was no medium; no alternative: the result must be, that Warren Hastings had been guilty of gross, enormous, and flagitious crimes, or, himself be a base, calumniatory, wicked, and malicious accuser. There were but three motives which were known to actuate men and excite them to turn accusers; ignorance, inadvertency, and passion. When he considered that Mr. Hastings had been fourteen years at the head of government in India, and not one complaint sent home against him, he trem-

* See Journals, v. xli. p. 668 to 733, and pamphlets by Stockdale and Debret.

† See the evidence in a pamphlet by Stockdale, 1786.

bled at the enormous power he had to contend with; for such silence could be ascribed to that alone, since it was not in human nature, situated as Mr. Hastings had been, to preserve conduct so pure, even-handed, and unimpeachable, as to afford no room for a single accusation. As to the charges themselves, excepting in some few points, the facts which they contained had been admitted by Mr. Hastings at their bar, in what he had called his defence, but which he had composed and delivered rather in the style of their master than that of the person they were accusing. He entered at length into the circumstances preceding, attending, and following the Rohilla war, and dwelt on it, as an undertaking to extirpate the whole nation for four hundred thousand pounds.

The motion was supported by Mr. Powys, Lord North, Mr. Hardinge, and several other members, and, on an adjourned debate, by Mr. Francis and Mr. Anstruther, and most powerfully by Mr. Fox. It was opposed by Lord Mulgrave, Mr. Burton, Mr. Grenville, and Mr. Dundas, and, on a division, rejected by a considerable majority*.

Anticipating this decision by the course of the debate, Mr. Burke seems to have considered the impeachment as altogether lost; for he said that, if the motion were negatived, in justice to himself, and to leave behind him a record that neither motives of party nor private animosity had governed his conduct, he would move the several facts on which it was founded, as truisms, in separate resolutions, that they might remain on the Journals for his justification.

A surprising change took place when Mr. Fox submitted to the House the charge respecting the treatment of Cheyt Sing, and the consequent revolutions in Benares. Having detailed, and in glowing language animadverted on, these transactions, he said that Parliament must appear either avengers of the oppressed, or accomplices of the oppressor.

Mr. Francis had enforced the charge, and Mr.

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.

Motion re-
jected.
2nd.

13th.
Mr. Fox moves
the Benares
charge.

CHAP.
LXI.1786.
Speech of
Mr. Pitt.

Nicholls had professed his clear conviction of Mr. Hastings's innocence, when Mr. Pitt disclosed his sentiments. He could not but lament that his duty peremptorily over-ruled his inclination to absent himself entirely from the proceedings; for he felt the greatest difficulty and uneasiness in determining on judicial questions, the merits of which were so closely connected with Indian principles and habits, while his mind was under the insurmountable impression of sentiments and feelings imbibed and matured under the British constitution. He stated his general opinion on the condition of the Zemindars, the doctrine of subordinate principalities, and the necessary dependence to which they must be liable; and applied these observations to the particular state of Benares. The presents, as they were called, were like the benevolences which had formerly been paid to our own sovereigns in commutation for military service; and, in acquiring the territory, the Company became intitled to them, in the same manner as they had before been paid to the vizier. On the death of Sujah ul Dowlah, two modes of arrangement with his successor had been proposed by Mr. Hastings; but both over-ruled by Mr. Francis, and an arrangement ultimately effected with his son, Cheyt Sing, by which a certain annual sum was to be paid to the Company; but, although exempt from any increase of his jumma, or annual tribute, he was yet liable, according to his ability, to demands for the service of the Company on any pressing emergency. But the charge imputed to Mr. Hastings a design to ruin Cheyt Sing, so soon as, by the death of General Clavering and Colonel Monson, he had acquired a majority in the council. He desired the House to pause for a moment, and consider the full force of this insinuation. Could there be a more malignant charge brought against a man? Must not all who heard it necessarily conclude that the accuser intended to impress an opinion that this act was the effect of a wanton and deliberate malice, long bent on an act of cruelty and injustice, which was perpetrated on the very first opportunity? To have passed

over a circumstance so obvious and striking as the intelligence of the French war, and to have discovered a motive so base and diabolical as that which he had imputed to Mr. Hastings, could only be accounted for on principles extremely injurious to the candour and integrity of the honourable gentleman, or else by supposing that the laborious and pertinacious attention which distinguished his conduct in every other part of this proceeding, was, in the present instance, more unfortunately for himself than for Mr. Hastings, somewhat intermitted. He vindicated the right of the Council of Bengal to call for extraordinary aids for defence of the Company's interests; nor was the aid demanded extravagant, considering the well-known ability of Cheyt Sing.

Yet he felt it impossible to acquit Mr. Hastings of the whole charge; for he had pushed the exercise of the arbitrary discretion intrusted to him to a greater length than was warranted by the necessity of the service: he was firmly persuaded that Mr. Hastings had been influenced, through the whole of his government, by the warmest zeal for the interests of his employers; but that zeal, however commendable in itself, lost its merit when exerted in a manner repugnant to principles, which should never give way to motives of interest or policy. The Council of Bengal, having made a well-warranted demand, which had been contumaciously resisted, were justifiable in inflicting punishment on the delinquent; but it was their duty to apportion the punishment to the degree of guilt: in fining the Rajah five hundred thousand pounds for a mere delay in paying fifty thousand (but which, in fact, he had actually paid), Mr. Hastings had proceeded in an arbitrary and tyrannical manner. It destroyed all relation and connexion between the degrees of guilt and punishment; it was grinding; it was overbearing; utterly disproportionate, and shamefully exorbitant. The subsequent revolution of Benares was an event that, under all the circumstances, could not possibly have been avoided: for Cheyt Sing having reluctantly obeyed, in one instance, the orders

CHAP.
LXI.

1787.

Impeachment
voted.

of the Council, and having disobeyed the other part of their commands, the governor was at liberty to impose a fine, and to march into his country to enforce the payment.

The astonishment occasioned by the conclusion of this speech, contrasted with its antecedent parts, appears to have taken away the power of resistance or reply. The debate was feebly continued: the cause of Mr. Hastings was espoused by Lord Mulgrave, Major Scott, Mr. Grenville, the Attorney-general, and some other members; but, on a division, the impeachment was voted*.

Feb. 7.

Oude charge.

Mr. Sheridan's
celebrated
speech.

Except some unimportant motions, no further progress was made in these charges until the following session, when Mr. Sheridan introduced the fourth charge, relating to the Princes of Oude, by one of the most eloquent orations ever heard in Parliament. It occupied, in the delivery, five hours and three quarters, and was hailed, at its close, by the unprecedented compliment of long and repeated clapping of hands. Of this celebrated display, little beside the reputation remains; the report in the Debates is exceedingly flat and jejune: a separate publication, said, in the title page, to be by "a member of the House of Commons," is rather a narrative or review than a speech; and it is said that, although Mr. Sheridan was frequently urged, and, from his habit of preparing and writing out his speeches, undoubtedly able to have done it, he would never publish a report of it himself†. It would therefore be a vain and useless task to extract from such materials parts of this celebrated, but lost, harangue. Its effect, and the opinions pronounced on it at the time by all parties, amicable and adverse to the speaker, are the only medium through which a judgment on it can be formed. Mr. Burke declared it to be the most astonishing effort of eloquence, argument, and wit united, of which there is any record or tradition. Mr. Fox said, "All that he had ever heard,

* 119 to 79.

† Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. i. p. 451. The report alluded to was published by J. French, Fenchurch Street.

“ all that he had ever read, when compared with it, “ dwindled into nothing, and vanished like vapour “ before the sun.” Mr. Pitt, although he censured its bitterness and acrimony, acknowledged that it surpassed all the eloquence of ancient or modern times, and possessed every thing that genius or art could furnish to agitate and controul the human mind. Several members confessed that they had come down strongly prepossessed in favour of the accused, and imagined nothing less than a miracle could have wrought so entire a revolution in their sentiments. Others declared, that although they could not resist the conviction that flashed upon their minds, yet they wished to have time to cool before they were called upon to vote ; and although they were persuaded that it would require another miracle to produce another change in their opinions, yet, for the sake of decorum, they thought it proper that the debate should be adjourned*. This course, resisted at first, was finally adopted ; and on the following day, Mr. Francis having opened the debate, and Major Scott having laboriously defended Mr. Hastings, Mr. Pitt threw his weight into the opposite scale, and the motion on this charge was carried†.

As the impeachment of Mr. Hastings was now irrevocably determined on, a very slight sketch of subsequent proceedings in the House of Commons may suffice. An intimation, given by Mr. Burke, being understood to imply that Mr. Hastings had disposed of funded property to the amount of fifty thousand pounds, Major Scott, by a declaration upon his honour, and a statement of Mr. Hastings’s pecuniary circumstances, refuted the calumny, and shewed that his entire property did not exceed fifty thousand pounds. Mr. Burke denied that his observation was intended for Mr. Hastings ; it applied to Sir Elijah Impey.

Mr. Thomas Pelham having moved the charge relative to the revolution in Farruckabad, Mr. Dundas

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1787.

Impeachment
on this charge
voted.

Further proceed-
ings.

19th.

March 2.
Farruckabad
charge
moved by Mr.
T. Pelham.

* Copied from the Annual Register, vol. xxix. p. 150. See also Tomline’s Life of Pitt, vol. ii. p. 39 ; and Moore’s Life of Sheridan, ubi supra.

† 175 to 68.

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1787.

suggested that it could not add much to Mr. Hastings's criminality or punishment, and could not be proved without the production of a vast volume of evidence. Lord Hood bore ample testimony to the honourable character and unimpeachable integrity of Mr. Hastings; but Mr. Pitt suggested that the noble Lord imputed the sentiments of his own breast to that of another, where, he much feared, they had not existed. The motion was carried*.

15th.
Contracts by
Sir James
Erskine.

On the next charge, relating to contracts, which was opened by Sir John Erskine, Mr. Pitt observed that much of its matter was beneath the dignity of a parliamentary inquiry, and therefore added an amendment, confining the charge to certain contracts for bullocks and opium, and the salary of Sir Eyre Coote. Another was superadded by Mr. Burke, extending the charge to the agency for rice and some other articles. Both amendments were carried, and incorporated in the resolution†.

22nd.
Fyzoola Khan
moved by Mr.
Windham.

Mr. Windham moved the charge respecting Fyzoola Khan, in a speech which united the elegance of a scholar with the solidity of a statesman and the fancy of a poet; the debate was short, and the charge was voted‡, distinguished principally by an observation of Mr. Dundas, that, although he should agree to the motion, he did not concur in the principles on which it was founded.

April 2.
Presents: by
Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Sheridan introduced the charge concerning presents. He had once conceived, he said, that Mr. Hastings had not been stimulated by any view to his own emolument; and that his fortune was trifling, compared with the advantages which fell within his power; but a more close and minute investigation had completely altered his opinion, and he scarcely doubted that he should satisfy the committee that the corruption of Mr. Hastings had been no less gross and determined, than his oppression and injustice had proved severe and galling. His conduct appeared to spring from a wild, eccentric, and irregular mind. He had

* 112 to 50.

† Mr. Pitt's, 60 to 28; Mr. Burke's, 66 to 57.

‡ 96 to 37.

been every thing by fits and starts. Now proud and lofty, now mean and insidious; now generous, now just, now artful, now open; now deceitful, now decided; in pride, in passion, in every thing changeable, except in corruption. In that he had proved uniform, systematic, and methodical; his revenge a tempest, a tornado; his corruption a monsoon, a trade wind that blew regularly and constantly. The principal speakers in the debate were Major Scott and Lord Mulgrave; the division was adverse to Mr. Hastings*.

To Mr. Francis was allotted the fifteenth charge, on the mal-administration of the Bengal revenues. He made a speech of great length; the debate was not interesting, and the motion was carried, but not by a great majority†.

At a very advanced period of the session, even after the impeachment had been announced to the House of Lords, Mr. Burke produced a sixteenth charge, respecting misdemeanors in Oude. Major Scott contented himself with treating the accusation as nonsensical, and averring that, where criminality was alleged, infinite merit would appear; and he did not divide the committee.

In the course of these discussions, Mr. Dundas, after some animadversions on the practice which had prevailed of asking for voluminous papers on the very eve of opening a charge, adverted to the state of the proceedings. Every gentleman must, he conceived, be desirous to have the impeachment go up to the Lords in sufficient time to have it put in a way of trial, at least, during the session; and, at any rate, he should consider it disgraceful to that House, if they did not form the articles of impeachment by the beginning of May, and enable the Lords to proceed on the trial in that month. He expected, therefore, that the report of the resolutions already voted would have been called for, and the necessary questions moved; so that, by the aid of professional persons, the articles of impeachment, which were to be ultimately carried up to

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LXI.

1787.

19th.
Revenue : by
Mr. Francis.

May 14.
Oude : by Mr.
Burke.

March 22.
Observations
of Mr. Dundas.

* 165 to 54

† 71 to 55.

CHAP
LXI

1787.

April 2 and 3.
Report of the
Committee.Committee ap-
pointed to
frame charges.May 9.
Debate on
their report.Impeachment
carried up by
Mr. Burke.21st.
Mr. Hastings
held to bail.

the Lords, might be regularly prepared, while the committee were inquiring into the remaining charges.

Mr. Burke acknowledged, with thanks, the propriety of this recommendation; and, members on both sides having expressed similar opinions, Mr. St. John, the chairman of the committee, speedily presented their report. It occasioned a debate of two days, chiefly on the form and manner of proceeding, when the House agreed in the resolutions, and voted that there was ground for impeaching Mr. Hastings on some of the articles*. A committee of twenty members was appointed, with the usual powers of calling for papers and witnesses; and on this occasion no division took place, except on the nomination of Mr. Francis; but he was chosen by a majority exceeding two to one†.

When the report of this committee was brought up, the motion that it be read a second time occasioned a lively debate, in which the conduct of Mr. Hastings was defended and applauded by Lord Hood, Mr. Wilkes, Mr. Dundas, Alderman Townshend, Mr. Nathaniel Smith, and Major Scott; the proceeding against him was vindicated by Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Pitt, and other members; and, after a division‡, the several articles were agreed to.

Mr. Burke, attended by a great number of members, immediately proceeded to the bar of the House of Lords, and, in the name of the Commons of England, impeached Warren Hastings, Esquire, of high crimes and misdemeanors.

Shortly afterward, the party accused was, on the motion of Mr. Burke, taken into custody of the Serjeant at Arms; but, being immediately conducted to the bar of the upper House, his custody was exchanged to that of the Gentleman-usher of the Black Rod. The

* Namely, the third, fourth, fifth, seventh, tenth, eleventh, twelfth, twenty-second, and eighth articles of charge; the fifteenth and sixteenth were afterward added.

† 96 to 44. The Committee were, Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Sir James Erskine, Mr. Thomas Pelham, Mr. Windham, the Honourable Andrew St. John, Mr. Anstruther, Mr. Adam, Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor, Mr. Welbore Ellis, Mr. Frederick Montague, Sir Grey Cooper, Mr. Francis, Sir Gilbert Elliot, Mr. Dudley Long, Lord Maitland, Lord North, General Burgoyne, and Mr. Charles Grey.

‡ 173 to 89.

articles of impeachment were read to him at length; he required a copy, and time to answer, which request was acceded to, and a month given. It had been proposed by Lord Walsingham that he should be held to bail in ten thousand pounds, with two sureties in five thousand pounds each. The Duke of Norfolk was desirous that the bail should be extended to fifty thousand pounds; and it was finally ordered that his own recognizance should be in twenty thousand pounds, with two sureties in ten thousand each: they immediately appeared, and were allowed. Mr. Hastings, also, by direction of the House, named, as his counsel, Mr. Plumer, Mr. Law, and Mr. Dallas.

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1787.

No part of this transaction occasioned more surprise, animadversion, and conjecture, than the conduct of Mr. Pitt. The friends of Mr. Hastings reckoned confidently on his support; the usual adherents of Mr. Pitt, who were not sufficiently in his confidence to know his inmost mind, fully expected that such would be his determination; and their astonishment was inexpressible, when, at the concluding part of a speech of great ability and beauty, and amounting to a complete vindication of great part of the alleged offence, he changed the tenor of his argument, and declared for an impeachment*. Conjecture, ever ready to assign indirect and dishonest motives to statesmen, did not spare the minister. It was surmised that jealousy of the great and increasing influence of Mr. Hastings at court occasioned this unexpected change. It was even believed that a wish expressed by the King to appoint the late Governor of India President of the Board of Control, was what decided Mr. Pitt to extinguish, by co-operating with the opposition, every chance of a rivalry, which might prove troublesome, if not dangerous, to his power. It is also alleged that he must have considered the whole proceeding, at this moment, as a seasonable diversion of the attacks of the opposition from himself and his measures. "The
" many restless and powerful spirits now opposed to

Observations
on the conduct
of Mr. Pitt.

* From the information of several of those members.

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LXI.

1787.

“ him, would soon have found, or made, vent for their
 “ energies more likely to endanger the stability of his
 “ power; and for drawing off some of that perilous
 “ lightning which flashed around him from the lips of
 “ a Burke, a Fox, and a Sheridan, the prosecution of
 “ a great criminal like Mr. Hastings appeared to fur-
 “ nish an efficient conductor*.” These opinions were
 very prevalent at the time; but they do not appear
 conclusive. The influence of Mr. Hastings could only
 have been felt at the Board of Control, the leading
 members of which, Mr. Dundas and Mr. Grenville,
 were not likely to fear any opponent; and, although
 Mr. Hastings enjoyed, in a moderate and proper de-
 gree, the favour of the King, yet there was no ground
 for believing that his interests would have been sus-
 tained against the firm opposition of any strong portion
 of the cabinet. In fact, had the impeachment been
 rejected, it is not probable that the subject of so much
 invective and obloquy could suddenly have been ad-
 vanced to a high official station. The other reason
 appears still less tenable. From the first formation of
 the Select and Secret Committees, Mr. Pitt had seen
 the members whose activity he was now supposed to
 dread, toiling through immense undigested masses of
 papers on the subjects of which they had little, if any,
 previous information, preparing reports of great length,
 number, and ability, and, at the same time, indefati-
 gably active on every subject of political inquiry, how-
 ever minute; and, as one of their achievements,
 driving from the helm an established and, until that
 time, well-supported administration. The labours
 then required from them were untried, and demanded
 strong co-operation; to those to which they had now
 destined themselves, they brought minds imbued with
 knowledge, a power of research rendered expert by
 practice, and a facility of favouring each other’s ex-
 ertions by dividing the labour and assigning, according
 to parliamentary usage, each several charge to the care
 of one particular manager. Without attempting to

* The words of Mr. Thomas Moore. *Life of Sheridan*, vol. i. pp. 445-6, 8vo.

explain the conduct of Mr. Pitt, or affectedly ascribing to him unbounded virtue or unprecedented candour, it is fair and reasonable to give him credit for just motives, unless some positive facts or declarations can be adduced tending to impeach him. It is not easy to believe that a snare so obvious could have been laid in the sight of individuals so eminently endowed with judgment and sagacity as the prosecutors of this inquiry; and, if any person could suppose that a device so shallow could be attended with effect, the sequel will shew how miserably he was deceived. If it were necessary to ascribe Mr. Pitt's conduct to any motive of party politics, unconnected with Mr. Hastings, it might, with more appearance of probability, be surmised, that, as he saw his opponents engaged with all their hearts, and pursuing with all their industry and energy the prosecution of the supposed delinquent; as he saw that all their splendid displays and gigantic efforts gained for them no extensive popularity, indifference being the general feeling; as he must be aware that many facts which they assumed as decisive would be explained, contradicted, or not adequately supported, when the case should be brought to rest, not on declaration, but on evidence, and that every failure would be recorded to their disadvantage, while the public feeling would be powerfully engaged in the cause of an individual attacked by such a formidable combination; he was pleased to see the members of opposition engaged in a conflict where success could gain for them no accession of influence or popularity, while failure would by many be deemed to inflict disgrace. His declarations and conduct throughout the debates are in conformity with this notion. In voting on one charge, he yielded to the eloquence of Mr. Sheridan, which he described as the "wand of the enchanter;" in another, he acquiesced in part of the accusation, although he described the residue as untenable, or below the dignity of Parliament; and, upon all occasions, he spoke of his intended vote as the result of present impression only, sufficient to found a charge, but not to warrant a conviction.

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.
Situation of
Mr. Francis.

Whoever might rejoice, whoever might triumph in the result of these debates, one member, who had been most active in originating, and most unrelenting in pursuing the charges against Mr. Hastings, had no reason to exult; this was his old opponent, Mr. Francis. In various parts of the proceeding, he was treated in a manner far from complimentary. On a motion which he made on the subject of evidence*, Mr. Pitt observed that he should be particularly jealous of any proposal proceeding from him, after his dishonourable and disgraceful conduct in the examination of Captain Mercer. He had procured a letter to be written to him by that gentleman, containing gross and violent calumnies against Mr. Hastings, and then so managed the examination of that letter, as to cause it to be entered upon the minutes of the committee, thereby making the House his accomplices in recording and publishing an indecent libel. He was nominated on the committee to prepare the articles of impeachment; but his name occasioned the only division which attended the formation of that list, and his motion on the fifteenth charge was favoured by a less striking majority than any of the others. He complained of a libel against him, published in a newspaper, but did not venture on a motion, and the House would not interfere†. When the impeachment had been carried up, and managers were to be appointed, Mr. Burke was, on all hands, thought worthy to be the first nominated, and the vote passed without a division: he immediately proposed Mr. Francis; but only twenty-three members were found acceding to the proposition; while, in rejecting it, ninety-seven concurred; and Mr. Burke in vain appealed against the vote, as it would occasion a chasm, by rejecting from the committee the only individual who, from every consideration, appeared most proper to be one of its members. In a few days, Mr. Fox revived the subject, by moving that Mr. Francis should be added to the list of managers; but, although he enforced the proposition by an able speech,

5th December.

10th.

* 1787, March 22.

† April 24.

and was supported by Mr. Windham, Mr. Dundas, General Burgoyne, and Mr. Francis himself, the House was inexorable, and the motion was rejected*. To allay those feelings by which Mr. Francis admitted himself to be affected, the other members of the committee wrote him a letter of regret and eulogy, which was immediately published; but unfortunately, some person, well acquainted with the person, situation, acts, and resources of the honourable gentleman, reprinted it, with remarks well calculated to render the laudatory parts of it doubtful†; and no public expression, beyond the letter thus answered, was proffered for his gratification.

CHAP.
LXI.

1786.

18th Dec.

To dismiss, for some time at least, the subject of Parliamentary impeachments, it will be necessary briefly to state the proceedings against Sir Elijah Impey. After some unavoidable delay, notice of the motion, at a stated day, was given by Sir Gilbert Elliot; but, that day being also found inconvenient, he did not produce his motion until the ensuing session. He considered the Supreme Court in India as a law job, as a colony for the bar in Westminster Hall, by which young adventurers in the profession, as well as in politics, were to carry their talents to the Indian field, and by which, in process of time, that House was to behold a learned as well as a lay squad from Bengal. After many more observations of the same kind, he shortly stated his charges. The first related to Nundcomar; the next was the Patna cause; the third, the unaccountable extension of the jurisdiction of the court; then came the Cossijurah cause; the acceptance of the office of the Sudder Duannee Adaulet, with an enormous salary, in direct disobedience to the act by which he held the place of supreme judge; and the last was founded on the affidavits which he took at Lucknow, in justification of Mr. Hastings's conduct toward the Begums of Oude, which was termed a scandalous prostitution of his high authority.

Motion for impeachment of
Sir Elijah Impey.

1787.
24th April.

12th Dec.

* 122 to 62.

† It was published by Stockdale, in 1788.

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LXI.

1787.

Sir Elijah Im-
pey defends
himself.

1788.
4th February.

April.

Sir Gilbert produced these charges in writing; and they were ordered to be received, read shortly, and printed.

Sir Elijah never shewed the least apprehension on the subject; and, when offered to be exempted from examination in Mr. Hastings's case, he declined the privilege, declaring that, as he had no consciousness of guilt, he was free from all impression of fear. At the first opportunity, he petitioned for a hearing, the examination of witnesses, and other business, occupied a long period of the session; but, being at length admitted to the bar of the House, he delivered a long, eloquent, and energetic defence. He shewed that the evidence adduced before a committee of the House, on the subject of Nundcomar, was inapplicable; but he complained of the libels which had been put into circulation on the subject, particularly one which imputed to Lord Mansfield a declaration that the legal murder of Nundcomar showed every person in Bengal what they had to expect. Although these attacks had been daily made for thirteen years, and vehemently renewed since his arrival in England, he had rigorously abstained from all vindictory publications, however urged and solicited. Far from uttering the sentiments imputed to him, the noble lord, whose name had been so indecently used, had declared that he had never formed any opinion on the subject, that the assertion was an absolute falsehood, and he had authorised the contradiction of it wherever made. He also cited letters of approbation which he had received from Sir William Blackstone, Lord Walsingham, Lord Ashburton, and the Attorney-general, Mr. Wallace. If the points insisted on, with respect to Nundcomar, were true,—if, for the purpose of screening the guilty from a just accusation, he had made the law of England the engine and instrument of a confederacy to accomplish the death of the accuser,—he was guilty, not of a misdemeanor, but of a murder, of the basest, foulest, and most aggravated nature; and life would then have been the merited forfeit. As to the claim of Nundcomar to especial protection as the accuser of

Mr. Hastings, he declared that the fact was unknown to him and the other judges, except by rumour; it formed no part of the prisoner's defence; evidence might most easily have been given, but it was not; nor, until the end of thirteen years, was it brought forward as a topic of accusation.

An adjournment having taken place, he completed his defence on the other charges, supporting his statements by official and public documents*.

The proposed impeachment formed the topic of languid discussions on three several days, and, at last, it was totally destroyed, by a motion that the House would, on that day three months, resolve itself into a committee, which passed without a division.

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LXI.

1788.

28th April.

7th May.

27th.

Motion lost.

* This admirable defence was printed separately, as a pamphlet; and it is inserted verbatim in Hansard's *Debates*, vol. xxvi. p. 1341.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-SECOND.

1786—1787.

View of Foreign Affairs—pacific aspect of the Continent.—Intrigues of France.—Dutch patriots.—Prussia.—Germany and Russia.—Proceedings in Holland.—Plans of the Patriots—their resistance of the Stadtholder—his embarrassed condition—state of the military—restraint of the press—insults to the Prince—capture of Hattern and Elburg—further proceedings of the patriots.—Applications for foreign aid.—Answer of England—conduct of France—indifference of Germany and Russia.—Death of Frederick the Great—disposition of his successor.—Insults offered to the Princess of Orange.—Conduct of the King of Prussia—energetic memorial.—Proceedings of the patriots—they are abandoned by France.—March of the Prussians—debates of the patriots—progress of the Prussians.—Stadtholder at the Hague—capture of Amsterdam—re-establishment of order. State of other countries—Germany—Russia.—Journey of the Empress—her meeting with the Emperor.—Turkey—at war with Russia.—France—her apparent greatness, but real debility—change in the sentiments and manners of the people.—Unfavourable impression made by the Emperor—calumnies against the queen—her conduct—affair of the necklace.—Disputes between the King and Parliament of Paris—Compte rendu of M. Necker—Administration of De Calonne—Convocation of the Notables—De Calonne's plan of finance—generally opposed—exertions of Comte De Mirabeau—De Calonne retires—De Brienne succeeds him.—Apathy of the superior classes.

CHAP.
LXII.
Pacific aspect
of the
Continent.

IF the absence of actual hostilities might be construed into an assurance of permanent peace, the prospect on the Continent of Europe could not be more

cheering than at this period. Slight differences between nations, adjusted without the formality of adverse declarations, without effusion of blood or dissipation of treasure, might be regarded as trivial incidents, interfering but little with the prospects of general welfare; yet there were principles in operation, and machinations in progress, which, at a period not far distant, must be expected to give full scope to those malignant passions which lead to the subversion of systems and engender fierce hostilities. Among the principal of these may be reckoned the prevailing desire to repudiate ancient connexions between nations, to form new combinations for the purpose of aggrandizement, and to renounce those domestic habits and abolish those marks of reverence toward persons and institutions which time had sanctioned, and which long acquiescence had rendered sacred.

France, after having assisted in establishing a republic in America, while, in Holland, she encouraged a domestic party against the Stadtholder, was now intriguing with Russia to prevent a commercial treaty with England, and contriving with the Dutch to acquire power and ascendancy in India.

Intrigues of
France.

Allusion has already been made to the efforts of a faction, who styled themselves Patriots, to degrade and vilify the Stadtholder, to dissolve effectually the ancient connexion of their country with England, and to admit, in its fullest extent, the ascendancy of France. The prominent leaders of this band were the pensionaires Von Berkel, Gyslaer, and Zeebergen; all bred to the profession of the law. Von Berkel obtained compensation for his want of success as an advocate, by a wealthy marriage with a lady of Amsterdam, by which means he became pensionary of that province. Some slight, which he conceived to have been offered to him, implanted in his mind a hatred of the Stadtholder, which time ripened into a deadly and imperishable rancour. Gyslaer enrolled himself as a partizan of Van Berkel in 1779, and, in consequence of his exertions on the question of convoy, was, through his influence, promoted from the office of pensionary of

Dutch patriots.

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LXII.

1786.

Gorcum to that of Dort. Zeebergen, pensionary of Haarlem, had made himself conspicuous in supporting the project of France when she undertook to regulate the commercial privileges of Holland, and he obtained for his town all the advantages which had before been enjoyed by Amsterdam. These men, and those who felt and acted with them, were delighted with the contumely displayed by the French ambassador toward the Prince and Princess of Orange*; but their views were limited to their own country, where they were anxious to keep up the spirit of faction; incapable of discerning the future consequences of their proceedings.

Notwithstanding the treatment which Holland had experienced in the treaties of peace, this party, the patriots, persevered in their efforts, insensible to the alarming state of their country, and indifferent to her prostration at the feet of her favoured ally. The Dutch East India Company was in a state approaching to bankruptcy; colonies most important were effectually retained by the French; they kept at the Cape a force of two thousand five hundred men, not encamped in the suburbs, but quartered in the town and in the citadel, and they were in perfect possession of Trincomale. For their passiveness before a foreign power, the patriots made themselves amends by their increased insolence to their native ruler. They professed intentions to alter the constitution of the state, by depriving him of the command of the army, and, in the excess of their fury, published placards inciting the people to bring him to the block, or banish him. The Princess of Orange, an amiable, accomplished, and sensible lady, was equally persecuted; insulted both in private and in public, and the subject of atrocious libels and furious menaces.

Prussia.

Her affinity to the King of Prussia warranted an expectation that he would exert himself in restraining the popular violence. In fact, his minister, M. de Thulemeyer, did present some strenuous remonstrances;

* Appendix to vol. iii.

but the patriots were too well acquainted with the condition of the King to treat them with much regard. Age, a love of indulgence, bodily infirmity, and an indisposition to put in hazard those great interests which, by his valour and wisdom, he had in his early days so gloriously acquired, rendered his interference extremely improbable. The difference between his views and those of France was, that he desired to preserve the form, at least, of an aristocratic government, while France, expecting advantage from throwing the country into a state of anarchy, was endeavouring to establish a pure democracy. A large portion of the people were adverse to the schemes of the patriots, and desirous to retain their ancient form of government, and to renew their beneficial connexion with Great Britain; but they were indolent, passive, and separate, wanting a master mind to inspire, and a commanding spirit to unite and lead them. The Prince of Orange, to whom they should naturally have looked up, was not so gifted; he had neither the quick perception, nor the vigorous resolution required by his circumstances: he relied for an impulse on the Princess, and she could only impart that which she received from the King of Prussia*.

During the dispute respecting the Scheldt, the public attention was absorbed, and the proceedings of the patriots less energetic than they had been: their leader, Van Berkel, displayed some love of his country, by declaring that her last shilling ought to be expended rather than submit to the terms proposed by the Emperor. If, in their further proceedings, they could have apprehended any interference on his part, his circumstances demonstrated the improbability. Embarrassed by the effect of his own rash innovations, he could not implicitly rely on his subjects in Flanders, and prudence obliged him to watch with care the proceedings of other states. Russia was as little to be feared; the Empress was avowedly pursuing schemes of aggrandisement on the side of Turkey, and, perhaps,

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LXII.

1786.

The Emperor.

Russia.

* Chiefly from Letters by Sir James Harris to Lord Carmarthen, in 1784. State Papers.

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LXII.1786.
Proceedings
in Holland.Plans of
the patriots.

other designs, which were ripened and disclosed by time.

In proroguing the Parliament, the King adverted to transactions then in progress in Holland, which were intitled to particular notice. Although disappointed in expectations of foreign aid, and not seconded so warmly as they expected by their countrymen in all parts of the Republic, the patriots had formed and avowed a project of reform, of which the leading particulars were—"That the forms of the present government should continue; but the States were to be completely independent of the Stadtholder, who was no longer to enjoy a seat in any of the colleges of the Republic. The *réglemens*, which were privileges held by the provinces of Guelderland, Utrecht, and Overijssel*, were to be abolished. They were established in virtue of certain regulations framed by the Pensionary Fagel, under the direction of William the Third, in 1674, by which the magistrates in those towns were appointed immediately by the Stadtholder, without the nomination of the councils. The right of the Prince to recommend candidates for vacant magistracies in the town of Holland was to cease. The rank of Captain General was to be separated from the office of Stadtholder, or at least the Prince should retain the title only; while the duties were exercised by elected deputies. In general, his powers were to be reduced to the lowest degree, consistent with his executing the orders of the state; and, not unless he acceded to these conditions, was the Prince of Orange to hold the hereditary dignity of Stadtholder."

As it was easily to be foreseen that all the members would not concur in a plan so subversive of the principles on which the union of Utrecht had been established, the patriots, who had acquired an ascendancy in the States of Holland, resolved to assert, on all occasions, the independence of those states, to diminish

* Called, from these regulations, *Provinces aux réglemens*.

the powers of the States General, and to disregard the opposition of other members of the union.

When the Stadtholder, in exercise of his long-acknowledged rights, attempted to nominate magistrates in the provinces to which the regulations extended, the patriots commenced an open and undisguised resistance. Under their three leaders they assailed the supreme authority, not only in this, but in every other particular.

The first subject on which this spirit was displayed seems but slight and trifling; but, in revolutions and insurrections, a great disparity between proximate causes and ultimate effects is not uncommon. The northern gate of the palace at the Hague had been considered as a way reserved peculiarly for the Stadtholder to the hall of the States General. Gyzaer forced this passage, and in this conduct was supported by his colleagues. In maintaining this point, he had, on another occasion, been exposed to personal danger; and, after some dispute, the gate was finally thrown open, not to the deputies alone, but to the public in general.

At this period the affairs of the Prince wore a most gloomy aspect. He possessed authority over the regular troops, whose number was said not to exceed six thousand, while the patriots had unlimited influence over the burgher's guard, a sort of militia formed during the war, respectable in numbers, although defective in discipline. To counteract this disparity, the patriots not only made every exertion to augment and animate their own force, but used their authority to diminish or supersede that of the Prince. The people were in arms on one side or the other. The Stadtholder collected a body of guards, and issued an edict against the press. If this measure was illegal, the conduct of the patriots provoked it; for nothing could exceed the virulence and coarseness of the numerous libels against the Prince, his family, and all who were supposed to be his friends. The patriots, on the other hand, finding that they could not secure a majority of members in the States General, influenced

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Their resistance of the
Stadtholder.

March 6th.

His embarrassed
condition.

State of the
military.

Restraint of
the Press.

Insults to the
Prince.

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1786.

each several state to legislate, arm, and act for itself. The Stadtholder was not dispossessed of the command of the forces, but was humbled by seeing his family arms excluded from the banners in which they had been hitherto most conspicuous; and such a popular fury was excited against the orange colour, that not only was it banished from every public display, but it was prohibited in dress; even the flowers and fruits of the earth were concealed from public view, if nature had marked them with the proscribed hue.

Captures of
Hattem and
Elburg.

Still, amidst all this arming and irritation, no act of real vigour, no military enterprize of a decisive character was undertaken. The Stadtholder had long ago retired to his palace at Loo, and there issued his proclamations and directions. Two towns in the province of Guelderland, Elburg and Hattem, having been garrisoned for the purpose of resisting the Prince's authority, a force, under General Sprengelev, was dispatched to subdue them. On receiving his summons, the free corps in garrison at Hattem declared their resolution to defend the town to the last extremity, and perish in the ruins rather than submit; and they commenced a cannonade which killed one man. The General having fired a shot into the air, and a shell into the town, the garrison retreated into Overysse, and the burghers surrendered; Elburg yielded without a shot, a defiance, or a boast.

Sep. 5th.

Further proceedings of
the patriots.

Sep. 4th.

In their decrees the patriots were more powerful than in the field. Gyzlaer, charging all the misfortunes which had so long afflicted the republic, the miscarriages of the American war, the late disgraceful arrangement with the Emperor, and many acts of oppression, to the personal misconduct of the Stadtholder, declared that it was now necessary to demand an explicit declaration of his intentions; and, if that were unsatisfactory, to suspend him, provisionally at least, from his office of Captain General; and obtained from the States of Holland a decree that the oath which obliged the army to obey the orders of the States General should be dispensed with; that the troops on the repartition of the province should be

called in from their respective garrisons; that the Rhingrave of Salm should be dispatched to Utrecht, and strong garrisons placed in the ports of Naarden and Woerden. A letter was likewise sent to the governor of Bergen-op-Zoom, enjoining him not to obey the orders of the Prince of Orange, who had directed the march of that garrison into the province of Guelderland; and when, in consequence of these contradictory orders, the matters were referred to the States General, those of Holland attended that assembly in a body (a circumstance hitherto unprecedented), and insisted on a compliance with their injunction. These violent measures, added to the successful exertions of the French agents in Friesland, Overysse, and Groningen, effectually checked the rising spirit of the States General. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of the Stadtholder and of Guelderland, they submitted to the removal of twelve regiments into the province of Holland, and even consented to issue orders for that purpose. The States of Holland, having carried their point, suspended the Prince from his office of Captain General, rescinded the resolution which gave him the patronage of the army, and put into commission the military departments of the province.

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1786.

22nd.

It was obvious that this angry legislation and un-military hostility could never tend to the adjustment of any national dispute. Each party had its own apprehensions: the Prince was uneasy at the discontent manifested in so many quarters; but the patriots were by no means confident that the country coincided heartily in their views. Foreign intervention was foreseen, and applications had been made to those powers where it was supposed that a friendly feeling might exist, and where private views or internal troubles might not disappoint the applicants. The English minister, Sir James Harris, had delivered the answer of his Sovereign, declaring his sincere friendship; his desire to see all their troubles terminated, and tranquillity re-established by preserving the true constitution, and maintaining the just rights and privileges of all members of the government. He

Applications
for foreign aid.

August 14th.
Answer of
England.

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1787.

Conduct of
France.

believed that the internal means furnished by the constitution itself were sufficient to accomplish this salutary object ; but if his mediation were requested, he would eagerly endeavour to bring the negotiation to a happy, solid, and permanent issue. France, if she had the inclination, had not the power, to interfere beneficially. Her intrigues, her missionaries, her writers, and her declaimers, had excited the flame which raged in so many bosoms, but military or pecuniary aid she could not give ; the ferment of opinions and the poverty of her treasury alike forbade such an expectation. Even had France, in spite of difficulties, resolved on the attempt, the spirit and firmness of the English government operated as a restraint ; for, when an intention to send a military force in aid of the patriots was rumoured, an armament was prepared on our part, and a treaty concluded with the Landgrave of Hesse ; but, finally, a quiet arrangement was concluded, by which the interference of either nation was explicitly renounced.

Death of
Frederick the
Great.

August 17.

Disposition of
his successor.

But a recent event had thrown into the scale a preponderating power, possessing both the will and the ability to act vigorously and effectually. Frederick the Great died*, and was succeeded by Frederick William the Second. The deceased monarch had no esteem for the Prince of Orange, nor did he much interest himself about the Princess, his niece ; but Frederick William saw with different eyes the troubles in which his sister and her husband were involved. Count Hertzberg, his minister, began a course of active and energetic negotiation, in which the Count de Goertz

* The period of time to which this work extends has enabled me to speak only of the declining years of this great man ; to notice his ill-founded, rancorous, and ungrateful malignity toward this country, and those weaknesses and uncertainties of character which were produced by the infirmities of age and the ungoverned impulses of temper. But the more glorious periods of his life are not to be forgotten or overlooked ; the noble military struggle which he maintained, in spite of adversities which would have driven most minds to despair ; the refined and well-judging policy, by which he not only preserved, but consolidated, his dominions, doubling the extent of his territory and the number of his subjects ; and the grandeur and freedom of the regulations by which he governed ; regulations certainly erroneous in many respects relating to religion and morals, but benevolently, and in general wisely, planned to give to his people happiness at home, and honourable station among the nations of Europe. See *Mémoires tirés des Papiers d'un Homme d'Etat*, tome i. p. 26.

was employed as Prussian minister resident at the Hague. Had the feelings and probable views of the new King been subject to doubt, a rash and unmanly act of the patriots rendered it impossible that, consistently with the feelings of honour, he should remain within the bounds of mere moderation. The Princess of Orange, believing, it is said, that her influence might be useful in assuaging the feuds which distracted the country, set out from Loo for the Hague, in her own carriage, and unattended by any military escort. Between Schoonhæven and Gouda, her equipage was stopped, at about five o'clock in the afternoon; she was surrounded by the free corps, and conveyed to a place called Goejan-verwelle-Sluys, where she remained, strictly guarded, during four hours, before she received a visit from the commissioners of Woerden. Even by them she was at first treated as a prisoner, and interrogated on the motives of her journey, in the presence of an officer of the free corps, who had constantly continued in the room since her first detention: but the dignity of her behaviour soon awed them into respect and civility, and they retired from her presence, abashed and disconcerted. She was then, at her own request, reconducted to Schoonhæven, where she arrived at eleven at night. From thence she wrote to the States General and to the Sates of Holland, to explain the motives of her intended journey; at the same time complaining, in dignified, though moderate, terms, of the treatment she had received. Finding that there was no prospect of her obtaining permission from the States of Holland to proceed to the Hague, she departed for Nimeguen, where she arrived in the afternoon, and was received with a degree of joy proportioned to the fears occasioned by her detention. The States General contented themselves with expressing disapprobation of the insult; the people sunk into despondence; and the States of Holland, encouraged by the pusillanimity of their adversaries, boldly approved the detention of the Princess, extolling the Woerden commissioners for having preserved order and tranquillity within the province.

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June 28.
Insult offered
to the Princess
of Orange.

30th.

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1787.

Conduct of the
King of
Prussia.
July 10, 13.
August 6.
Energetic
memorial.

Proceedings of
the patriots.

21st.

They are aban-
doned by
France.

For what purpose, or with what view, except the mere gratification of plebeian insolence, this outrage had been committed, it was impossible to divine. All who thought rightly throughout Europe, censured it; all the superior class of the Dutch were astonished and indignant; and many of the patriots themselves viewed it with a sort of terrified stupefaction. It may be doubted whether the Princess intended a mere journey, or whether her setting out was an experiment on the coarseness and violence of the patriots, in which their behaviour was foreseen, and even desired. If the former were the case, their conduct is inexcusable; if the latter, as they could not know the fact, they were equally to blame, while their want of prudence and judgment adds contempt to the censure they incurred. The King of Prussia promptly and energetically demanded a full, honourable, and exemplary reparation and satisfaction for this insult. In a formal memorial to the States of Holland and West Friesland, he treated the indignities offered to his sister as to himself. He would not, he said, be contented with a discussion of detached circumstances, vague excuses, or with shifts and evasions.

Anticipating, in some degree, this intervention, the patriots had issued orders in the provinces where they could be obeyed, for raising troops and embarrassing their adversaries. A camp for four thousand of the free corps was traced out, contracts for horses and provender were entered into; the army of the States of Holland was to be recruited to twenty thousand men; and by enlistments in France, and levies in their own provinces, they hoped to swell their force to thirty thousand. They also resolved, if necessary, to inundate the country. Some of these levies having been effected, they seized the town of Delft, and took into their hands the arsenal and magazines, dismissing all public officers attached to the Orange party. The Hague was seized in the same manner; and in the province of Friesland similar exertions were made.

But these displays of irregular energy and procrastinated preparation, could not give confidence to the

considerate men of the Republic, much less engage the active exertions of foreign states. The French ambassador was recalled, and, before his departure, publicly declared the wish of his court that the required satisfaction should be given.

A Prussian army, exceeding twenty thousand men, commanded by the Duke of Brunswick, was now assembled at Wesel, and, as a last effort to avert hostilities, a *note verbale* was delivered to the States General by M. De Thulemeyer, to which an answer in four days was required. The patriots, in debating this message, far from mitigating their tone, or abating their pretensions, used language more lofty and insulting than ever. Van Berkel declared "that the note of the King of Prussia was too insulting to deserve consideration, and should only be answered by silent contempt. That every real patriot must have too much confidence in the justice of his cause, and in the protection of Providence, to subscribe to such humiliating conditions. That the city of Amsterdam would not even deliberate concerning the acceptance of terms so injurious." Gyzlaer expressed nearly the same sentiments. His colleague, Roode Westmaas, declared "that a sovereign state could never consent to make excuses to the wife of its first servant." Zeebergen also held the same language; and, in fine, it was determined by the majority to answer, "that the States could not enter into any deliberation on the points mentioned by M. De Thulemeyer, but would send two deputies to Berlin, to inform his Majesty of the erroneous statement which had been made to him."

Had these proud declarations been warranted by a general disposition in the people, or any appearance of a force adequate and disposed to support them, some opinion of their propriety might be maintained; but, with the knowledge of their own circumstances which the party must have had, they can be considered only as the effusions of despair, disguised under the appearance of insolent boldness.

The Prussian troops entered the territory of the

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1787.
August.

Sept. 2.
March of the
Prussians.

8th.

10, 11.
Debates of the
patriots.

Progress of
the Prussians.

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13th.Entry of the
Stadtholder
into the
Hague.

24th.

Capture of
Amsterdam.

Oct. 1st.

10th.
Re-establish-
ment of order.

Republic. To trace their progress, would only be to recount, in tedious repetition, instances of want of courage in those who had provoked aggression, of armies retreating or surrendering without a struggle, of prisoners who never ventured to try their strength in conflict, and of towns which capitulated without a shew of resistance. The rapid march of the Prussians frustrated all attempts to cut the dikes; the patriots began to quarrel among themselves, and the people hailed the invaders as liberators. They decorated the cannons with orange-coloured ornaments, formed triumphal arches of the same dye, and produced their silks and ribbands in such profusion, that it was made matter of wonder how so much orange-colour could be found, after the labour which had been bestowed on its suppression. On entering the Hague, the Stadtholder was met by the corps of Orange burghers, who drew his carriage through the town in triumph; and when the Princess arrived, she received the same compliment from the women.

One resource was still left to the patriots,—the city of Amsterdam, well situated for defence, and sufficiently garrisoned. The Duke soon advanced, and by persevering assaults, conducted with great military skill, succeeded in obtaining possession. Some days were consumed in finally arranging the capitulation; but this measure carried with it the settlement of the country. The representatives of the town took their seats in the Assembly of the States of Holland, and agreed, unconditionally, to all the resolutions which had been passed for confirming the lawful authority of the Stadtholder. The magistrates who had been forced upon the town, by means of the free corps, were dismissed; the expelled agents reinstated in their former authority; a garrison was ordered; the free corps disarmed, and seventeen obnoxious persons, of whom a list had been transmitted by the Princess, were declared incapable of ever serving the Republic. The States of Holland, in consequence of petitions from the different towns, authorized the Prince to appoint a commission for new modelling all the regencies

in the province. A new form of oath, containing a precise recognition of the Stadtholderate as an essential part of the constitution, was prescribed to the magistrates. The different provinces mutually guaranteed to each other the form of government now established; and this important revolution seemed to have given to the Dutch constitution as much stability as it was capable of receiving. The States General also concluded treaties with the courts of London and Berlin, forming a close union of those commanding powers*.

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If it occasioned surprise that this extraordinary transaction, excited in a great measure by the intrigues of France, should be so speedily, easily, and almost ludicrously terminated, by an intervention, founded, not on a general or political, but on a mere personal ground, a view of the state of other countries will diminish that impression.

State of other
countries.

Joseph the Second, by the assistance he had afforded the Empress of Russia in acquiring the Crimea, and his acquiescence in her further views on the territories of the Porte, was bound to observe the progress of those projects, and to hold himself ready to act according to circumstances. He had, besides, ambitious views of his own on the territory of Bavaria, which had before excited jealousy and alarm, and induced the powers who were interested to form, under the auspices of Frederick the Second, the confederacy, called the Germanic League†. Views of ambition and aggrandisement, once admitted to the mind of a Sovereign, are seldom renounced but on compulsion; and Joseph still nourished hopes of obtaining the desired and truly important acquisition; hopes which would be favoured by the death of Frederick, but which might have been materially deranged by his plunging into a quarrel which would generate hostilities either with Prussia

Germany.

* For the above details I have consulted the Histories and State Papers; also, *Histoire des principaux Evénemens du Règne de Frédéric Guillaume II, Roi de Prusse*, par L. P. Ségur L'Aîné; Coxe's *History of the House of Austria*, v. iii. p. 606. *Aux Bataves sur le Stathouderat*, par le Comte de Mirabeau. Letters written in Holland, by Thomas Bowdler, Esq.; and an anonymous, but able *History of the late Revolution in Holland*, published by Edwards, Pall Mall, 1789.

† *Homme d'Etat*, tome i. p. 34.

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or France; therefore, while he privately encouraged the patriots of Holland, and gave refuge in the Netherlands to the adherents of France, he took no public part in the contest, rejoiced, no doubt, to see the arms of Prussia employed in a manner which to him portended no danger. He was besides involved in many difficulties occasioned by his own ill-considered attempts at reform; attempts always dangerous, and rarely beneficial to sovereigns. If it were supposed that the removal of the great curb to the injustice and cupidity of his house would be personally advantageous to Joseph, that too was an error; Frederick had ceased to draw the sword but for self-defence, and the influence of his character and fame was beneficial, and not injurious, to the Emperor*.

Russia.

Inflamed with the desire of territorial aggrandizement, and anxious for the dismemberment or destruction of the Ottoman empire, Catherine pursued these great objects, unrestrained by scruples of political faith, unimpeded by any principles of morality or integrity. To further her views, she had made with Joseph a compact of alliance, the exact extent of which has not been divulged; and had gained the friendship of France, by declining the renewal of treaties with Great Britain. In her newly-acquired possessions on the Black Sea, she had abolished the Turkish, and re-established the Greek names of places; and her consuls and agents were employed in exciting discontents among the Greeks and other Christian subjects of the Sultan. For the purpose of striking with awe the Tartar hordes bordering on the extremity of the Turkish empire, she made a progress into the southern provinces of her European dominions. In this journey, no circumstance was omitted which could flatter her pride or display her power. Beside the members of her own court and household, the ministers of Austria, England, and France, appeared in her train. Immense crowds of spectators assembled along the line of her march, bonfires illuminated the road, pioneers levelled

Journey of the
Empress.
1787.* See Coxe's *House of Austria*, vol. iii. chapters 47 and 48.

obstructions, changing the face of the country ; a flotilla of magnificent barges awaited her arrival at the Dneiper, where she was to embark for Cherson ; and the inhabitants of entire villages, with their flocks and herds, were transferred to parts near the banks of the river, for the purpose of making a desolate and barren region appear prosperous and populous. Large bodies of troops, dressed in new uniforms, exhibited, for her entertainment, all the manœuvres of a battle ; and, at Pultowa, an exact representation took place of the celebrated conflict in which her predecessor, Peter the Great, vanquished the supposed invincible hero of Sweden. The King of Poland, whom Catherine had placed on his throne, and to whom, it is said, she had remitted a large sum to defray the expense, waited on his patroness at Kaniek. Three and twenty years had elapsed since their last interview ; he made every effort to render their meeting agreeable, decorating one bank of the Dnieper with a splendid illumination. He travelled under his ancient title of Count Poniatowski ; his reception was most gracious, and a portion of the gallantry which had distinguished their earlier days seemed to blossom afresh ; but, whatever address Stanislaus could apply, he failed in obtaining from Catherine either grant or promise of political benefit. One useful friend the King of Poland acquired,—the favorite Potemkin, who long remained attached to his interests.

A more important and distinguished visitor was Joseph himself, who seized that opportunity of seeing his ally, and arranging their political projects. The Emperor, in his eagerness for this interview, was at Lanberg three weeks too early ; and, when informed of the Empress's approach, hastened toward Cherson, and met her on the road. The journey was so precipitate and unexpected, that the two great sovereigns, for want of notice and preparation, were obliged to accept a scanty meal provided by Potemkin, and even assisted, with their own hands, in executing some of the arrangements. Scenes of unrivalled splendour, which were continued while Joseph was in her society, obli-

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1757.

Meeting with
the Emperor.

April.

18th May.

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1787.

15th June.

Turkey at war
with Russia.

15th August.

France.

terated the memory of this slight and momentary inconvenience. At Cherson the Empress made a magnificent entry, under a triumphal arch, on which was an inscription in Greek, "The way to Byzantium." Batcheseraï, the capital of the peninsula of the Crimea, Sebastapol, where she could view a powerful navy of her own, floating dominant, in the Black Sea, and many other places in the Crimea, contributed to gratify the pride and display the power of the ambitious, politic, and fortunate Empress. The Emperor was called from her side by the report of commotions in Flanders, which demanded his presence at Vienna; he took a reluctant and tardy leave, and it was observed that he appeared, at this time, utterly forsaken by his wonted alacrity and cheerfulness.

Catherine's progress and the attending circumstances had given great alarm at the Porte; the proceedings of some of her naval commanders were, not unjustly, considered as outrages; and, at length, the Turkish government, thinking hostilities inevitable, anticipated the disadvantages of an attack by a declaration of war, which was followed by some maritime captures and the bombardment of Kinborn at the mouth of the Dnieper. The Czarina vindicated her proceedings by a manifesto, sought to gain time by proposing the intermediation of France, and called on Joseph for assistance, which, although bound by treaties, he was at the moment unable to render*.

France, the instigator of the intrigues, and the expected coadjutor in the struggles which agitated and menaced other countries, was, herself, in a critical and extraordinary condition. Never was semblance more opposed to reality than in her apparent and real political state. Ostensibly, France had the renown of being a conqueror and liberator in America; she was the ally of Spain and Austria, the protectress of Holland, the friend of Prussia; she enjoyed an unrivalled influence at Constantinople, gave subsidies to Sweden,

* See Coxe's *House of Austria*, vol. iii. chap. 49.—Castéra, tome iii. livre ii. Ségur, *Histoire de Frédéric Guillaume*, tomes ii. and iii.

and, by her recent treaty with Russia, she had broken the connexion between that country and England, and gained the ascendancy over her great political opponent. Such is the picture drawn by the hand of a well-informed French writer*; but her real state, instead of being viewed with exultation, or even with indifference, was calculated to inspire alarm, if not absolute despair. Institutions, religious and civil, were assailed with unsparing contempt; persons, who from their situation, had formerly been deemed exempt from such attacks, were now treated with undisguised contempt, with scurrility and ribaldry; the finances displayed a terrifying gulph, in which the credit and prosperity of the nation must ultimately be swallowed; and the government exhibited that certain sign of feebleness, dispute among its component parts, and a frequent change of ministers; every one bringing his own expedient, and retiring more and more overwhelmed with the scorn and hatred of the people. Yet, while no nation drew the sword, and events succeeded each other in measured succession, these appearances produced little effect; nor, perhaps, would they do so now, but for the strong and dreadful light cast on them by subsequent events.

Victory in America, achieved, as it had been, not in consequence of an impulse given to the national antipathy and envy against England by wise counselors, but of the wilful impetuosity of a few juvenile adventurers; victory, the result of which was to establish a republic by the overthrow of sovereign authority, might, justly perhaps, be admired in theory, but could not fail of producing the greatest evils in a state where the ties of religion were much, not to say altogether, disregarded, the sanctions of morality not very rigidly observed; where a growing envy of wealth, rank, and privileges was evidently rendering the possession of them insecure, and where the increasing distresses of government daily added new force to the declamations of the discontented, and the exertions of the disaffected.

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LXII.

1787.

Change in the
sentiments and
manners of the
people.

* Ségur, Histoire de Frédéric Guillaume, v. ii. p. 119.

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1787.

Since the return of the officers who had served in America, they had formed a party by which republican doctrines were maintained, and a corresponding mode of eloquence adopted. If the cause of the Americans had rather suffered than been advanced by the coarse unpolished appearance and manners of their envoys while in Paris, it gained more than in proportion, when men and women of rank and quality made it the theme of national pride, and suggested it as the model for imitation ; when, in a word, they made it a fashion, there where fashion governed every thing ; and where the fashion, or prevailing opinion, diffused itself over the whole kingdom, and governed more than the edicts of law, or the declarations of the King or his ministers. In other respects, the forms of society were visibly undergoing a great and dangerous alteration. Religion, not merely that established, but the Christian faith in general, was openly and virulently assailed ; and morality, or even decency of conduct, was rather tolerated as weakness than applauded as virtue. It is not intended at this moment, to enter into the discussion whether this effect proceeded from a strong perception and quick resentment of impostures in the supporters and founders of the religious system, from the diffusion of slight, shallow, and useless information, or from the insidious labours of secret societies, formed and sustained for the purpose of producing a total change in the morals and religious feelings of the people, or how far they were influenced by all or any of these causes.

Unfavourable
impression
made by the
Emperor.

Whatsoever hopes might have been entertained from the marriage of the King with a Princess of the Imperial Family, or from the intercourse of personal friendship between Joseph the Second and the French court, time soon shewed how little basis there was for favourable expectations. The personal manners of the Emperor, not agreeable even to his sister, were very unpopular with the French people. An inquisitive familiarity was not redeemed by any display of real dignity ; a caustic severity, in speaking of national manners, was not atoned for by those conciliatory and

soothing expressions which prudence and politeness would alike have dictated, and what, perhaps, more than any thing else, renders a royal character unpopular; no act of liberality or munificence ever distinguished the presence of Joseph.

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1787.

Opinions formed on the conduct of a foreign prince, a mere transient visitor, might have been of little importance; but a royal personage remained to bear all the weight of these unfavourable judgments, and to suffer in her character, her interests, and her person, the injuries which must arise from them. The Queen soon became an object of attack to a host of libellers; French were represented as subordinate in her mind to Austrian partialities; a fable was invented and greedily swallowed, that a junto, which was denominated an Austrian committee, sate in the palace, under the auspices of the Queen, and in correspondence with the ministers of her brother, for purposes most inimical to the interests of France; her Majesty's country seat, Trianon, was denominated little Vienna, and, as a term of opprobrium, she was called the Austrian.

Calumnies
against the
Queen.

Nor was the conduct of the Queen altogether calculated to dispel this deadly vapour of unpopularity. Animated by youth, buoyed up by high spirits, and unguarded through conscious innocence, she did many things which afforded themes to her disadvantage. The manners of her own country were in opposition to the rules of etiquette which had long governed the French court; rules which, even if they had been in themselves superfluous and ridiculous, should never have been scorned or violated by a royal personage. Evening parties, to which persons were admitted who were in rank below those who generally had been allowed the privilege of familiar intercourse; walks in the groves of Trianon, protracted till late hours; many other minute circumstances, which rather denoted the fearlessness of innocence than the crafty workings of guilt, were eagerly seized upon, and, by the aid of inventive falsehood, fabricated into fables of a description most scandalous and nauseous, but which were

Her conduct.

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greedily received by a people ever ready to give force to detraction, and particularly predisposed to disbelieve the existence of female virtue.

Another characteristic of Marie-Antoinette gave great advantage to her enemies, and was, perhaps, the basis of an atrocious plot against her honour and reputation: this was her love of gaming. At their public evenings, while the King, moderate in every thing, was enjoying the tranquil relaxation of playing for stakes barely sufficient to fix attention, the Queen, in the same apartment, was risking very large sums on the fluctuating chances of a rapid and irritating game. A worse consequence than the loss of money or of temper ensued: persons of a low degree in society were necessarily admitted to produce the bank or fund to be played against; their interests must be protected by vigilant observers, who were, in course, not superior in rank to themselves; and thus a royal table was crowded with a base and worthless herd of degraded associates*.

Affair of the
necklace.

On the want of money which this passion for play inevitably occasioned, a plot was founded, which, in its result, was of great prejudice to the character of the Queen. A court jeweller was in possession of a diamond necklace of very great value†, which he had offered to her Majesty for sale, but which she had refused. This fact becoming known, an intriguing sharper, named De la Motte, and his wife, deluded the Cardinal de Rohan, a priest rather desiring than possessing court favour, into a belief that he would render a most acceptable service by obtaining this costly ornament for the Queen. The jeweller was deprived of his goods by means of acknowledgments to which the forged name of Marie-Antoinette was affixed: when he came to apply for his money, the fraud was detected. Criminal proceedings were instituted; De la Motte having escaped, was, in his absence, sentenced to the galleys for life; his wife, less fortunate, was

* *Mémoires sur la Vie privée de Marie Antoinette*, par Madame Campan, vol. i. p. 211.

† A million and a half of livres (£62,500).

apprehended, found guilty, and condemned to the whipping-post and the gaol; but these minor victims were of little importance; the Cardinal, after vainly attempting to explain his conduct to the King, was apprehended; but, by an extraordinary negligence or treachery, he was permitted to send an order for the destruction of his papers: all proof against him failed, and on his trial he was acquitted. Several princes and persons of the highest rank, to whom the Cardinal was related, had made great interest for him; and the clergy, from the highest downwards, embarked themselves in his cause. This event was of indescribable disadvantage to the Queen. That some great person had been the accomplice of the De la Mottes was indisputable; and as the Cardinal was exculpated, the malignant portion of the community were but too ready to lay the guilt of this dirty and infamous transaction on her whom they were already endeavouring to destroy*.

These circumstances were important in a country like France, where discussion is always ardent, and passion produces many effects from which more deliberate reason would recoil; but other events, of a much more exalted character, gave a strong impulse and bias to public affairs. The Parliament of Paris, a body whose powers were undefined, but which had always been distinguished by its ambitious struggles, now assumed, for a time, a great political influence. Many monarchs had banished the members of this body, so as, in effect, to occasion a dissolution; but they were always recalled, and always advanced in power. They were in a state of banishment when Louis the Sixteenth ascended the throne; their recal

Disputes between the King and Parliament of Paris.

* This is a very succinct statement; but ample details may be found in many publications; particularly in the *Mémoire justificatif de la Comtesse Valois de la Motte*; *Mémoires sur la Vie privée de Marie Antoinette*, par Madame Campan, tome ii. p. 1; and *Mémoires de l'Abbé Georgel*. Of this last writer it is proper to observe, that he was the grand-vicar and intimate friend of the Cardinal, and to him was directed the order to burn the papers. An explanation which exculpates the Cardinal of guilt, although it convicts him of extreme folly, is given in Bertrand de Moleville's *Annals of the French Revolution*, vol. i. p. 422. These writers, and the histories of the times, have been consulted for the narrative of these facts.

CHAP.
LXII.

1787.

Financial
difficulties.Compte rendu
by M. Necker.

was one of the most popular acts which distinguished the early part of his reign; their violent and insidious proceedings were among the causes which drew down misery and ruin on his latter years.

Difficulties in finance had long been felt; and, amidst all her ambitious projects, and all her attempts on the freedom of other governments, angry discontent and fiery discussions on this irritating and alarming subject had long agitated the state, and menaced the public security. Before his expulsion from office*, M. Necker had published a detail of the financial state of the country, under the title of *Compte Rendu*. The statements in this publication were, by many, severely arraigned; but the work itself, its motives, and its probable effects, were the objects of still more serious animadversion. Abuses were disclosed, whether truly or not, but no remedy was suggested. It was calculated only to excite discontent and clamour: it was an appeal to the people against the King, by a minister of the King himself†.

In England, where a constitutional body, commanding the public purse, could have investigated every particular of abuse suggested, and applied a proper remedy, such an exposure might have been censured as indiscreet, but would not have been dangerous. In the case of M. Necker, it appeared like the desperate parting effort of a man, who, feeling he can no longer retain the station in which he is placed, does all in his power to make it untenable by any other. In fact, during an administration of four years, he had witnessed the existence of oppressive and unequal taxes, and much abuse in the collection of them: no impositions more just and equal had been made by him, nor had any abuse been mitigated, or any error rectified.

1783. After the dismissal of Necker, M. De Fleuri and M. D'Ormesson, each for a short time, undertook the direction of the finances; but with so little success,

* In 1781.

† *Particularités et Observations sur les Ministres de Finance en France*, par M. le Baron de Montyon, p. 239.

that their intervention seemed only to prepare the way for the introduction of M. De Calonne, who, thus obtaining the object of his ambition, found himself at the helm of an ill-conducted vessel, not beloved by the master, and contemned, if not hated, by the crew. M. Necker had too strong a party among the people to permit his rival's popularity; the partizans he had at court were rendered unserviceable by the Queen's avowed dislike of him: he was obliged to find expedients for relieving the necessities of the state; but although some of his measures were acknowledged to be wise and just, others met with a determined opposition. The Parliament of Paris refused to register an edict for the loan of three millions and upward, which he had prepared. Their decree was annulled by the King; but the minister, unable to cope with this body, and unwilling to adopt the usual and never popular measure of banishing the members, determined on another and apparently a popular plan, that of convening an unusual assembly, under the title of *Notables*.

This body, composed of one hundred and forty-four members, selected generally from the highest ranks of the clergy, the law, the military body, and the landed proprietors, assembled in Paris. After some delays, the minister submitted to them his new plan of finance, which was at least liberal and just. It extended to an abolition of all privileges which exempted individuals or public bodies from the payment of taxes, and a strict inquiry into all privileges and abuses affecting the public interest. This scheme united against its author the leading men of every description. The partizans of Necker, and agitators of the public mind, adhered to the statement in the *Compte Rendu*, that the revenue in his time was exactly balanced, and a surplus of nearly half a million sterling remained to the public. Those who were, through ambition, desirous of supplanting M. De Calonne, advanced objections equally vehement, although differently stated; and the privileged classes, the nobility, clergy, and magistracy, true to their imagined, although blind to their real, interests, added their weight to the opposition.

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LXII.

1784.
Administra-
tion of De
Calonne.

Convocation
of the Notables

1787.
January.
De Calonne's
plan of finance.

Generally
opposed.

CHAP.
LXII.

1787.

Banishment of
Necker.Exertions of le
Comte De
Mirabeau.

In these proceedings, the minister had been made to feel the daily increasing power of the press. He had imprudently undertaken to refute the statements in the *Compte Rendu*: Necker published a reply, and was banished to his country seat at St. Ouen; conduct which was sure to increase his reputation, and ruin that of his rival. Another adversary presented himself in the person of the Comte De Mirabeau. This individual, already known by his political and literary productions, but much more by the irregularities of his life and his family disputes, now pressed forward as an opponent of the minister, determined, as he expressed it, to plant himself in the breach, even if he got his head broken in the conflict*. His work was read with avidity, and produced great effect on the public mind; the more, perhaps, because the author, although adverse to De Calonne, did not enter the lists as the champion of Necker, or any other person aspiring to office.

De Calonne
retires.

M. De Calonne, unable to oppose this formidable combination, resigned office and retired into England. His place was successively occupied by M. De Fourqueux, who did not retain it above a month, M. De Villedeuil, and M. De Lambert, each of whom also resigned, after a very short period, during which they neither effected nor attempted any financial operation; and, finally, M. De Brienne, Archbishop of Thoulouse. The Notables were soon dissolved, and the old mode of administration restored†.

De Brienne
succeeds him.Apathy of the
superior
classes.

Amidst all these distresses, and with the unrestrained clamour of public discontent sounding on all sides, the Court and the higher orders seemed to enjoy themselves in perfect security. Undisturbed by the fearful signs of the times, among which the frequent changes of ministry were not the least alarming, the pursuits of ambition, interest, or pleasure, were never intermitted; and all these indications of danger were utterly unperceived, or inconceivably disregarded.

* Lettres de Mirabeau à Mauvillon.

† In these details, I have consulted the histories and the other authorities mentioned in a former note.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-THIRD.

1787—1788.

Tranquillity at home.—Meeting in Parliament.—Addresses voted unanimously in both Houses.—Debate on the treaty with Hesse.—Augmentation of the army.—Debates on the promotion of flag officers.—Lord Rawdon's motion.—Mr. Bastard's three motions—all unsuccessful.—Troops embarked for India.—Difficulties.—Mr. Pitt's bill.—Debates. Mr. Sheridan's parallel between the bills of Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt.—Discussions on the slave trade—general principles.—Efforts of writers, political, religious, moral and satirical.—Doctrines laid down by eminent lawyers.—Exertions of Mr. Granville Sharp—his success.—First petition to Parliament.—Formation of a society—its rapid increase—and consolidation.—New petitions.—Committee of the Privy Council appointed.—Opinions of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville.—Delegates sent from Liverpool.—Evidence adduced by them.—Counter-evidence.—State of the parties interested.—Numerous petitions.—Mr. Pitt's motion,—Mr. Fox.—Bill for regulating the conveyance of slaves.—Petitions from Liverpool.—Counsel heard.—Witnesses examined.—Their account of the treatment of slaves in ships.—Debate.—Bill passes the Commons—amended—withdrawn in the House of Commons.—New bill introduced—which is also withdrawn—but a third bill passes.—Observations.—Prorogation.—State of the continent.—War between Russia and the Porte.—Conduct of the Emperor of Germany. Attempt on Belgrade.—Joseph's declarations of war.—Great preparations of Germany and Russia.—State of the Turks.—The Russian fleet in Cronstadt.—Sea-fight off Hoogland.—War in Finland.—Denmark makes war on Sweeden.—Siege laid to Gottenberg.—Interference of the

British minister.—The Turks defeated near Oczahoff—
which is taken by storm.—Proceedings of Joseph the Se-
cond.—Siege of Belgrade.—Marshal Loudon commands.—
His popularity.—Vigorous operations.—Captures Novi.—
Prince Coburg takes Chotzim.—Unmilitary conduct of the
Emperor.—End of the campaign.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1787.
Tranquillity at
home.

Nov. 27th.
Meeting of
Parliament.

Address in
both Houses.

IN the British dominions, public tranquillity was undisturbed, and national prosperity regularly advancing. Confidence in the administration was generally entertained, and the cares of commerce and pursuits of pleasure divided the attention of all classes.

In addressing the two Houses, when they re-assembled, the King gave a brief account of the transactions in Holland, and his negotiations; and, advert-
ing to the flourishing state of commerce and the revenue, recommended zeal and unanimity.

The Earl of Harrington made, and Viscount Bulkeley seconded, the motion for an address, which was voted without opposition, after a short and unimportant debate, in which the Bishop of Landaff expressed full approbation of the acts of government, and declared that, if Holland were lost, England was undone.

In the lower House, Mr. Dudley Ryder proposed, Mr. Brooke seconded, the address, and it was carried unanimously. Mr. Fox, while he generally approved the acts of ministers, reserved his definitive opinion until his sentiments on the treaty with Hesse Cassel should be produced; and he reminded the House that, in the debate on the commercial treaty, he had given them warning of the perfidy of France.

28th and 29th.
Debate on the
treaty with
Hesse.

Dec. 3rd.

Hessian
subsidy.

When the treaties were laid on the table, Mr. Fox required a copy of the notification given by France of her intention to interfere in the disputes of Holland, which was refused, because it was unnecessary, and because it formed part of a long dispatch, the contents of which ought not to be disclosed. The effort was renewed, and a formal motion made, but without effect. On Mr. Pitt's motion for a grant of £36,093, for the Landgrave of Hesse's subsidy, Mr. Fox expressed ap-

prehensions that, by such a treaty, Hessian troops might be landed in this kingdom; but Mr. Pitt considered so small a sum merely as a retaining fee, obliging the Landgrave to be always on our side, and to aid us with twelve thousand men if required.

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1787.

Mr. Burke, in his usual manner, blended a portion of extravagant pleasantry with much profound political wisdom. He approved of the measures pursued with respect to Holland, and the renewal of continental connexions, an adherence to which had rendered Great Britain glorious;—the admiration of surrounding nations. The Chancellor of the Exchequer had done wisely in giving the Landgrave a retaining fee; he would, when a fit cause should arise, prove an excellent advocate, and produce most powerful arguments in our behalf; but hoped this country would never be involved in a war on account of Hessian interests. The King's speech, he said, was more like epic poetry, or a romance of chivalry than history; and made some entertaining allusions to Palmerin of England and Don Belianis of Greece. The supply was voted without a division.

Mr. Burke.

It was next proposed to increase the army to sixteen thousand nine hundred and eighty-two men, including sixteen hundred and twenty invalids; one of the principal causes assigned being the defenceless state of the West Indies. This motion occasioned a spirited, but rather eccentric debate; many topics connected with the army, but not immediately comprised in the intended vote, being introduced. Colonel Fitzpatrick and General Burgoyne insisted on the propriety of appointing a commander-in-chief, and denied that the existence of peace furnished any objection. Mr. Bastard preferred an increase of the navy to an augmentation of the army. Mr. Fox impugned, and Mr. Pitt defended, the proposed measure, in speeches of considerable length. The House divided on the resolution to send an increased number of troops to the West Indies, which was carried by a large majority*. Two divisions afterward took place on a

10th.
Augmentation
of the army.

1788.

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LXIII.1788.
March 12th
and 13th.Debates on
the promotion
of flag officers.February.
Lord Rawdon.
20th.

clause in the mutiny bill for incorporating a newly-formed company of military artificers ; but the debates were void of interest, and the measure proved eminently useful*.

A promotion in the naval service, in which the rank of admiral was withheld from certain officers, who, by their standing and merits, appeared intitled to claim it, afforded subject for debate in both Houses. Lord Rawdon observed on the indignity with which veterans were treated, who, after employing their years and losing their blood in the service, were doomed to see striplings, who had partaken in no service, advanced above them at the caprice of a minister ; and he moved an address, praying that his Majesty would take into consideration the case of those captains who had been passed over in the late naval promotion. Little argumentation was required to shew that such an address would be directly hostile to the royal prerogative, and really detrimental to the state, as it would occasion a personal inquiry every time a grant of rank was made or withheld. The motion was negatived without a division.

Mr. Bastard's
three motions.

In the lower House, Mr. Bastard shaped his motion with more skill, but with no better success ; it was for an address praying his Majesty to confer some mark of his royal favour on Captain Balfour and Captain Thompson, who had received the thanks of the House for their behaviour on the glorious twelfth of April. After an animated discussion, in which the merits of the two officers were fully allowed by all, the motion was withdrawn.

April 8th.

In this debate, the great leaders on either side took no share ; but, after two months, Mr. Bastard returned to the subject, and said that as his former motion, which he considered lenient and favourable to ministers, had been rejected, he should now re-produce it in a form more harsh ; and, having dwelt at length on the cases of Captains Uvedale, Shirley, Balfour, Leforey, Bray, Dalrymple, and Thompson, he moved

* 114 to 67, and 142 to 70.

for a committee to investigate the conduct of the admiralty, with regard to them.

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LXIII.

1788.

Many naval and military officers delivered their sentiments; and Mr. Pitt, while he acknowledged that to set aside men of distinguished merit and untainted character must be injurious to the service, denied that a sufficient case had been established to justify the required proceeding. Mr. Fox maintained that the complaint would warrant a Parliamentary investigation. He admitted as sacred the prerogative of distributing military honours and rewards, and did not consider the House of Commons a proper place for canvassing promotions. He could not have voted for an address to the Crown; but he would vote for a committee, as the best mode of fulfilling the peculiar duty of the House, in watching over the executive departments, detecting abuses, and instituting inquiries, with a view either to censure or punishment. Mr. Sheridan observed, that if the House was not able to judge of the qualification of Admirals, they were able, and it was their duty, to judge whether or not the Lords of the Admiralty had acted consistently with sound principles.

After a protracted discussion, the question was lost on a division, by a majority of sixteen only*.

Animated rather than subdued by this defeat, Mr. Bastard gave notice that he should again introduce the question in another shape; and he did so, by moving, in the very words used by Mr. Pitt, "that it is highly injurious to the naval service to set aside, in promotions of flag officers, individuals of distinguished merit and approved service, who are not precluded by any orders of his Majesty in council." As fact and argument had been exhausted in the former debates, the present produced no novelty. The division was less favourable to the mover than on the former question†.

29th.

While the affairs of Holland led to a belief that the united efforts of that country and France might

Troops embarked for India.

* 150 to 134.

† 220 to 169.

CHAP.
LXIII.

Difficulties.

be directed against the British interests in India, the Board of Control thought it necessary to embark four regiments for that service. The tranquillization of the United Provinces did not change this determination ; but difficulty arose as to the future maintenance of this reinforcement. Ministers considered that, by the provisions of Mr. Pitt's act, they were intitled to draw funds from the territorial revenues : the Company, and their judgment was fortified by the opinions of several eminent counsel, thought that such appropriation could not be made.

Feb. 25.
Mr. Pitt's
bill.

To end this dispute, Mr. Pitt brought in a bill to remove all doubts. During its whole progress, it was debated with more vigour and amplitude than could have been expected from the nature of the subject. Almost every considerable member of the House delivered his sentiments. No one could maintain that it would be wise to leave those valuable possessions in the state which had occasioned so much animadversion during the last war ; but every principle which had been laid down, every pledge which had been given during the debates on the bills brought in by Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, was called to memory, and its breach or maintenance alleged and denied with the greatest vehemence. In these discussions, which engaged the lower House seven days, and the upper House three, nothing can be found which would justify recapitulation, even in the most condensed form. The ministry had a majority whenever the House divided ; but the comparative numbers were never so unequal as to shew that the cause of the opposition was hopeless, or their resistance unfounded*. In the course of the last debate, Mr. Sheridan presented a statement, in parallel columns, of the difference between the bills of the two great political leaders ; it was received by the House with much satisfaction, and afterwards, at the request of several members, printed, with a preface and explanatory notes†.

Debates.

Feb. 25.
March 3, 5, 7,
10, 12, 14, and
March 17, 18,
19.Mr. Sheridan's
parallel be-
tween the bills
of Mr. Fox
and Mr. Pitt.

* The first division was on the question for going into a committee, 182 to 125, majority 57 ; the second on a motion to receive the report of the committee, 182 to 115, majority 67 ; the last on the motion for a third reading, 127 to 73, majority, 54.

† The pamphlet, published by Debrett, 4to. 1788, well deserves consideration.

In the House of Lords, three divisions took place, and in each the minister had a flattering majority*. A protest was signed by sixteen peers; but not distinguished by any great vigour of thought or force of expression.

Some other regulations of inferior interest were discussed; but the subject which most of all fixed the attention and agitated the feelings of the nation, was the attempt now formally made, and regularly pursued, for abolishing the slave trade. That the practice of acquiring by purchase, or, as it was alleged, by fraud and by force, the possession of human beings, who were to be removed from their native shores and condemned, with their progeny, to interminable toil at the will and for the profit of absolute strangers, should have been permitted, nay encouraged, by the Christian governments of Europe, would occasion at first surprise, but subsequently, much stronger feelings. Yet, a system in which all nations in possession of colonies agreed, a trade in which they emulously rivalled each other; a commerce guaranteed in England particularly, by the faith of charters, the force of statutes, the sanction of time, and the claims of interest, could not, at once, be broken down by the mere use of abstract reasoning, however forcibly adduced or judiciously applied.

Territory had been acquired by European powers, both on the continent and in the islands of America, by such horrible means, by the remorseless extermination of whole nations of aborigines; avarice had exacted from those who were permitted to survive, tasks so manifestly disproportioned to their strength, that the importation of negroes from Africa was, at first, recommended as a measure of mercy, at least of that comparative inhumanity, by which the misery averted from one body of men is put in balance against that which is inflicted on another†. But yet the positive injustice of the traffic could not escape the censure

CHAP.
LXIIL.

1787.

Discussions
on the slave
trade.

General
principles.

Efforts of
political, reli-
gious, moral,
and satirical
writers.

* 75 to 27—46 to 25—and 74 to 28.

† See on this subject, the Abbé Raynal, Bryan Edwards, and all other Historians of the West Indies. Also Montesquieu, de l'Esprit des Loix, liv. 15.

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LXIII.

1787.

of politicians, divines, and moralists, who had all, from the commencement of the trade, made occasional remonstrances against it. In modern times, the public mind had been prepared for its rejection by a class of writers who, appealing to greater numbers, made more general impressions than could be produced by those who, with more labour and greater individual force, assailed the object of their censure. Thus the affecting narrative of Yarico, told by Lygon in his *History of Barbadoes*, and pathetically amplified in the *Spectator**; the interesting and artless descriptions of Defoe; the vehement censures of Warburton†; the thundered epigrams of Johnson; the lively sarcasms of Voltaire; and, perhaps not least, Bickerstaff's well-drawn character of Mungo, in the *Padlock*, predisposed the minds of men to feel kindly toward the Africans.

Doctrines laid
down by emi-
nent lawyers.

England was particularly fitted to be the scene for efforts against slavery. The genius of her people and the structure of her constitution formed a natural and favourable tribunal, to which appeals might be addressed. The courts of law had frequently been called upon to decide questions on the right of proprietors, bringing slaves into this country, to retain dominion over them, and even send them back to the colonies at their pleasure. The supposition that proprietors had such a right was strengthened by a joint opinion given many years before‡ by two very eminent lawyers, that a slave by coming into Great Britain or Ireland, with or without his master, did not become free; that his master's right and property in him remained as before; that baptism did not confer freedom, or alter the condition of the slave; and that the master might legally compel him to return to the plantations. Such an opinion, authenticated by the names of Mr. Talbot and Mr. Yorke, who both successively attained the highest dignity in the legal pro-

* See Lygon, p. 74; *Spectator*, No. 11. The admirable drama of George Colman was not produced until the question of the slave trade was fully before the public.

† Essay on the Divine Legation of Moses. Works, v. ii. p. 330. Sermon preached 21 Feb. 1766. Works, v. x. p. 55. These, and many more authors, are referred to by Clarkson, c. 3.

‡ In 1729.

fession, formed a powerful obstacle to the efforts of those who sought to establish the contrary doctrine. At length, through the almost incredible perseverance and devotedness of Mr. Granville Sharp, the point was brought under full and deliberate consideration, and the final decision, consistently with the spirit of the English constitution, and in direct opposition to the formerly received opinion, was, that so soon as any slave set his foot upon English territory, he became free*. Elated with this success, Mr. Sharp wrote to Lord North, earnestly adjuring him immediately to abolish, not only the slave trade, but slavery itself, in all the British dominions (which, it is to be remembered, comprized at that time the now United States of America), as utterly incompatible with the principles of the British constitution and the established religion.

Mention has already been made of a petition sent to the House of Commons for abolishing the trade†. Long before that period, the Quakers in America had, at their yearly meetings‡, disclaimed all participation in the enslaving of negroes, denounced the purchase of man by man, exhorted all members of their body to abstain from it, and excluded from their community those who persisted in the practice. Their censures were not limited to the mere prosecution of the trade; for they declared that, “to live in ease and plenty by “the toil of those whom fraud and violence had put “into their power, was neither consistent with Christi- “anity nor common justice;” and they evinced their sincerity by a general emancipation of their slaves. The petition from this body, already alluded to, was presented by Sir Cecil Wray, and his motion for receiving it was seconded by Lord North, who commended its principles, and regretted that the advanced period of the session would not permit a due consideration of its contents§. At the same time he allowed that the trade, against which the petition was

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LXIII.

1788.

Exertions of
Mr. Granville
Sharp.

His success.

First petition
to Parliament.

* See the case of James Somerset, argued in 1772, Hargrave's State Trials, vol. xi. p. 339. Howell, vol. xx. p. 1.

† See vol. iii. p. 497, c. 45.

‡ In 1754, and yearly afterward.

§ It was presented on the 17th June, 1782.

CHAP.
LXIII.1788.
Formation of
a society.

so justly directed, had, in a commercial view, become necessary to almost every country in Europe.

Nearly four years elapsed before any new application was made to the legislature ; but the interval was actively employed. A small number of men, firm in determination and vigorous in action, formed an union, or the centre of a society, which it was their aim to extend in every direction. They secured in their interest a certain number of newspapers, both in the metropolis and the country ; pamphlets were issued in great numbers, some replete with general argument, others with details of particular grievances ; the pen of the poet was enlisted in the cause, and proselytes flowed in from all quarters. Cases of supposed cruelty, amounting even to horrible murders were detailed, and, although they were not made the subject of any criminal proceeding, they were printed, and went forth as facts too well authenticated to admit of dispute. It is hardly necessary to say that the public was deeply interested. The subject itself presented many facilities for impressive declamation. Virtue, religion, honour, justice, furnished many warm advocates and sincere proselytes ; many who did not wait for the effects of profound reflection, or who could not, with a nice hand, adjust the balance of political prosperity against the counterpoise of general sensibility and impulse of sentiment, added to the number ; nor was the occasion neglected by some, who, without affecting to think deeply, seized with alacrity means of shewing a disposition to humanity and benevolence at the expense of others. Thus a numerous and increasing party was formed, strong in the truth and enthusiasm of their own feelings, and confirmed by ample support and co-operation.

Its rapid
increase ;

Coadjutors were supplied from all parts ; every form of religion, and every rank in life, swelled the list of proselytes. Many members of Parliament might be enumerated ; but Mr. Wilberforce demands particular mention, as his strenuous efforts and devoted adherence to the cause, during a long course of years, connect his name inseparably with all the proceedings, and

make him a centre around which all persons and proceedings are collected and united. Thus aided and supported, the society assumed a name, elected Mr. Granville Sharp their chairman, and formed for themselves a characteristic common seal, representing a negro kneeling in an imploring attitude, with chains, fetters, and manacles on his limbs, and an inscription, "Am I not a man and a brother." But in these proceedings there was no rash violence, no want of prudent caution and consideration. They who undertook so great an innovation did not expect instant success. They knew that they should have to win, by slow gradations, a difficult and hazardous passage; and, while they endeavoured to excite and direct popular opinion, they carefully concealed the full extent of their project, fearful that, if they declared the emancipation of the slaves already existing, as well as the prohibition of further importation, they should diminish the number and enfeeble the efforts of their adherents*.

Thus, in all the petitions which came before Parliament, the abolition of the trade alone was required. By the industry of the society, and of Mr. Clarkson in particular, who was one of their most active, zealous, and intelligent members, information was obtained on every point which could throw light on the discussion, or repel objections to the prayer of the petitions. The state of the trade, the value of goods exported, the tonnage employed, the number of seamen engaged, the comparative mortality in this and other trades, with anecdotes of the manner in which negroes were obtained, and in which they and the mariners were accommodated and treated during the passage, were collected, and a selection of them, most qualified to make an impression, communicated to the public, aided by additional tracts and volumes.

When, by these means, a powerful ferment had been created, and all classes were eager in the discussion of the question, when petitions to Parliament became frequent and numerous, the King, by an order

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LXIII.

1788.
and consolidation.

1787.
New petitions

Committee of
the privy council
appointed

1788.
Feb. 11th.

* Clarkson's History of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, vol. i. p. 288.

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LXIII.1788.
February 11.

in council, directed that a committee of that body should be formed, as a board, to consider the state of the African trade in slaves, particularly the manner and practice of purchasing or obtaining them on the coast, and the importation and sale in British or in foreign colonies; the effects and consequences of the trade, both in Africa and the plantations, and on the general commerce of the kingdom; and to report the result, with their observations.

Opinions of
Mr. Pitt and
Mr. Grenville.

At this period, Mr. Wilberforce being in a bad state of health, Mr. Clarkson, at his request, applied to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville. The premier had not hitherto deeply considered the question; but having afterward, by patient investigation, convinced himself that the grounds of the application were not only just in themselves, but consistent with the true interests of the country, he gave his warm and hearty approbation to the cause. Mr. Grenville had, from the first, taken the same view of the matter, and was now strongly confirmed in all his previous opinions.

Delegates sent
from Liver-
pool.

Liverpool being principally interested in the question, delegates were sent from that town to support the trade. The evidence adduced by them was first heard; it tended to shew that, in procuring negroes, none of the alleged enormities were committed; that the agents employed did not instigate the African sovereigns to make wars for the purpose of acquiring slaves for the market; and that the rule of these despots was so ferocious and sanguinary, that it was a benevolent and humane act to rescue their unfortunate victims from cruel and wanton slaughter.

Evidence
adduced by
them.Counter
evidence.

These statements gained, for some time, a considerable ascendancy in the minds of the committee; but they were met by the testimony of persons not less acquainted with Africa, its kingdoms, and their government, and generally with the whole subject. The witnesses in support of the trade laboured under the disadvantage of being personally interested in its continuance. Some of them, it was said, before they had been appointed delegates, or had reason to believe that their evidence would be called for, had given accounts

and made statements very different from those which they now advanced. One witness seems almost providentially to have been cast into the scale of the abolitionists. It was Dr. Andrew Sparrman, professor of natural philosophy and inspector of the museum of the royal academy at Stockholm. He had recently been employed, in conjunction with Mr. Wadstrom, on botanical researches in Africa. Both were in England, and the evidence of Dr. Sparrman, clear, consistent, exempt from all suspicion, and founded on recent observation, was of great force in forming the judgment of the committee, which was now obviously inclined against the trade.

Still two classes of persons, who had risked or invested their property in this hitherto encouraged traffic, found reason to complain. The merchants of England, with their agents, were charged with acts of perfidy and cruelty, and their witnesses were termed interested. It is certain that when strong feeling is excited, and assumes the character of passion, evidence is given by the parties so affected which interest could never have produced. To serve what they consider the good cause, men will arrive at extremes, to which by any motive personal to themselves they could not have been impelled. In several instances, horrible murders were imputed to masters of slave vessels, and yet, although the witnesses were stated to be here, no prosecution was instituted, no means afforded of estimating the value of their testimony, or the nature of their motives, or of repelling their assertions by contradictory evidence. And when excitements to war for the purpose of making slaves were proved, not the English, but the agents of other countries were designated as the instigators. Yet the British capitalist, the British merchant, and the British planter, were exposed to all the obloquy, threatened with all the ruin which would ensue from the measures proposed, and were, by a sort of anticipated judgment, held forth as a class, if not exactly to be abhorred, at least to be viewed very differently from their fellow-subjects*.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1787.

State of the
parties in-
terested.

* The above statements are derived from Clarkson, vol. i., and the Preface to his Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species, which obtained

CHAP.
LXIII.1788.
Numerous
petitions.May 8, 9.
Mr. Pitt's
motion.

Petitions exceeding a hundred, from different communities and various parts, had been presented, when the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced the subject to the House, lamenting that indisposition still occasioned the absence of Mr. Wilberforce. The number of petitions shewed that the public mind was, in no common degree, interested. Some thought the trade ought altogether to be discontinued; others, that it ought only to be better regulated; but all agreed that it ought not to remain in its present state. All the matters required for the information of the House could not be produced at that advanced period of the session; but investigations were proceeding elsewhere, which would enable Parliament to form resolutions founded on humanity, justice, and sound policy. His motion was, that the House should resolve to take the question into consideration early in the next session, when, if Mr. Wilberforce's indisposition should continue, he would take charge of the business himself. As the whole matter could not then be discussed, he would not declare, or even intimate, his own opinions.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox said, that, having long and attentively considered the subject, he had intended to introduce it to the notice of Parliament; but saw with satisfaction that the task was assumed by the member for Yorkshire, in whose hands it never would be considered a party question. He regretted that so many petitions, so respectably signed, could not be taken into immediate consideration, but preferred a parliamentary inquiry to one before the Privy Council. It was the duty of Parliament to give and not to receive advice from the King. The Privy Council, who had received no petitions from the people, had commenced an inquiry, while that House, the table of which had been loaded with petitions, had not instituted any. Mr. Pitt had forborne to deliver his opinions; but he inferred, from several phrases in his speech, that they did not widely differ from his own; and, without

the first prize in the University of Cambridge in 1785. The little that is related from general history is taken from Bryan Edwards, the Abbé Raynal, and the historical and commercial writers in general.

scruple, he would at once declare, that the slave trade ought not to be regulated, but destroyed. Humanity and justice formed the only grounds on which the question could be considered; to place it on any other principles would be idle and absurd. If there were men who, from local and interested considerations, thought the slave trade might still continue under certain modifications, they were the dupes of error; nothing could be the true interest of any description of men that revolted against the principles of justice and humanity.

Several members spoke, chiefly to declare the opinions of their constituents; but all agreed in the propriety of the motion, which was unanimously carried.

To prevent the evils which might accrue during this period of delay, Sir William Dolben obtained a committee of the whole House to consider the condition of the natives of Africa, during their passage to the British dominions. It was stated that there were no laws to govern the masters of vessels in this traffic, and that the trade itself was lawful only because it was not prohibited; and an attempt to regulate, would imply a recognition by Parliament of its lawfulness. Mr. Pitt, still cautiously abstaining from the announcement of a general opinion, effectually answered this objection; and a bill was brought in, providing temporary regulations for the middle passage.

On the motion for a second reading, some opposition was made by Mr. Gascoyne and Mr. Brickdale. Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Ewer afterward presented petitions from the merchants of Liverpool and London, praying to be heard by counsel. After a debate of some length, it was settled that the bill should be read a second time, and the prayer of the petitioners granted.

Mr. Piggott was heard on their behalf, and witnesses examined. Mr. Whitbread, as chairman, shewed great skill and sagacity in conducting the inquiry. The witnesses stated generally that the present mode

CHAP.
LXIII.

1788.

Bill for regulating the conveyance of slaves from Africa.
May 21.

26th.

28th.
Petitions from Liverpool and London.

June 2 to 17.
Counsel heard, and witnesses examined.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1788.

Their account
of the treat-
ment of slaves
in ships.

of transportation was sufficiently convenient, and well adapted to preserve comfort and health. The negroes had sufficient room, air, and provisions. When upon deck, they made merry and amused themselves with dancing. The mortality, or loss by death, was trifling, not exceeding five or six in the hundred; and the proposed measure, even if temporary, must be ruinous to those engaged in the trade. On cross examination, it was disclosed that every slave, whatever his size, had only five feet six inches in length, and sixteen inches in breadth, to lie in. The floor was covered with bodies thus stowed; between the floor and the deck or ceiling were often platforms or broad shelves, which also were covered with bodies. The height from the floor to the ceiling seldom exceeded five feet eight inches, and in some cases not four feet. The men were chained two and two together, by their hands and feet, and were fastened by ring-bolts to the deck. They were thus confined all the time they remained on the coast, which varied, according to circumstances, from six weeks to six months. Their allowance was one pint of water daily, and they had two meals of yams and horse beans. After eating, they jumped up in their irons; an exercise so necessary for their health, that they were whipped if they refused; and this had been termed dancing. They were usually below deck fifteen and sixteen hours out of the twenty-four. In rainy weather they could not be brought up for two or three days together. The mortality on the windward coast, where the African constitution was the strongest, was about five in a hundred; but at Calabar and Bonny, which were the greatest markets for slaves, it was greater.

Several assertions, as to the construction of the vessels, were refuted by Captain Parry, the only witness examined in favour of the bill; and he, having been deputed by Mr. Pitt to Liverpool for the purpose of the examination, proved that the statements which had been already made to the House by the petitioners' witnesses were incorrect, and particularly that the struc-

ture, internal accommodation, and comparative estimate of tonnage and number of persons conveyed, had all been misrepresented.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1788.

17th.
Debate.

A debate took place when the blanks in the bill were to be filled up, in which the evidence which had been adduced was ably analyzed by Mr. Beaufoy and Mr. Pitt; and one division took place greatly to the advantage of the petitioners*. It was finally enacted that the vessels should be so fitted up as to provide for the health and comfort of the negroes, and that not more than a certain number, in proportion to the tonnage, should be carried; and these regulations were to take place retrospectively from the tenth day of that month.

Bill passes.

In the upper House, petitions were also presented, counsel heard, and witnesses examined. The bill found more opponents in proportion than in the House of Commons. Earl Bathurst disapproved of the retrospective clauses, as constituting an *ex post facto* law; Lord Rodney and Lord Heathfield considered the bill as unnecessary; the Lord Chancellor, comparing the clauses with each other, declared they were nonsense; and several peers professed that a compensation ought to be made to those whose property would be injured by the retrospective enactment. Lord Sandwich denied that the trade was injurious to British seamen, but declared himself favourable to the bill; the Duke of Chandos, drawing his reasoning from experience, deprecated the whole discussion, as tending to create a dissatisfied spirit among men whose condition was, at that time, much happier than that of an English labourer, to excite insurrection, and probably to cause the massacre of the white people. On a subsequent day, a clause for compensation, proposed by the Duke of Richmond, was carried by a very small majority†. Some enactments were added for allowing bounties in certain cases; and the bill passed on a division‡.

18th.
Opposed in the
Lords.

25th.

30th.

Amended.

When returned to the Commons, it was observed that the new clauses made it a money bill, which could

July 4.
Withdrawn in
the House of
Commons.

* 56 to 5.

† 13 to 12.

‡ 14 to 11.

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LXIII.

1788.

4th
New bill.
5th. 7th.
Withdrawn.
8th.
Third bill.
11th.
Passes.

Observations.

not originate in the upper House; and, as the advanced period of the session forbade delay, the consideration of those amendments was postponed for three months, and a new bill introduced. Petitions were again tendered, but refused. In the House of Peers, they were presented, and counsel heard; new objections arose; that bill was also withdrawn; and, a new one being introduced by Sir William Dolben, finally passed*.

In whatever way it can be viewed, the conduct of the parties opposing the popular measure was extremely indiscreet and injudicious. If their trade was carried on in a manner which afforded no just ground of complaint, they would sustain no injury; while the inquiry they provoked tended only to inflame the prejudice against them. Submission to restrictions which the government has any right to impose on any branch or mode of commerce would have gained them friends, or at least would have mitigated, in some degree, the asperity of their opponents; while their resistance afforded ground for a belief that nothing would be obtained from them but by legislative enactment, to which Parliament would best be impelled by strong manifestations of popular opinion. Had the evidence they adduced been clear, consistent, and uncontradicted, their cause would have risen in the general estimation; but, shaken and tarnished as it was, it prepared the way for a belief that, in all parts of the question, witnesses would be found to support or vindicate any assertion that interest might advance. The facilities of the opposite cause, the industry shewn in collecting materials, and the skill displayed in using them, ought to have convinced these parties how perilous was their position, and deterred them from incurring risques either in promulgating opinions or in detailing facts.

Prorogation.
11th.

On the day after the bill had passed, Parliament

* In the above narrative, I have been much informed and guided by Mr Clarkson's work, already quoted. With respect to the latter transaction, on the second and third bill, the information in Hansard's Parliamentary History is very defective; but Mr. Clarkson's statements are fully supported by the Journals.

was prorogued. The tranquil state of the British dominions, its relations with the Continent, and the treaties concluded with Prussia and Holland, formed the only topics of the King's speech.

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LXIII.

1787.

Peace did not, however, spread her influence over all parts of Europe. War was still waged between the Russians and the Turks, and it seemed at one time to threaten a fearful extension; but operations were finally limited to a few of the principal powers. Joseph the Second postponed a junction with Catherine, to curb his own rebellious subjects in the Netherlands; a necessity to which he yielded with reluctance, being anxious to gain from the Turks some territory to counterbalance that which, by his consent, and even through his assistance, had been acquired by Russia. He was also in some degree uneasy at the union between the courts of London and Berlin, and at the efforts made by the French to prevent the dismemberment of the Ottoman empire. But the temporary tranquillity obtained in the Netherlands enabled him to act with more freedom. He had affected the character of mediator between the belligerents; but suddenly, while this semblance was still continued, two columns, under general Alvinzy and Gemmingen, crossed the Danube and the Save. Their intent was disappointed, through the badness of the roads and state of the weather, so that, after a night's toilsome and uncertain march, the vanguard of the first column alone reached its destination, a neck of land on the Turkish territory under the walls of Belgrade, where their situation was so exposed and hopeless that their preservation was entirely owing to the magnanimous forbearance of the enemy, who, instead of wreaking deserved vengeance on the heads of these unprincipled invaders, permitted them to repass the Save, and accepted an humble apology from Alvinzy. The Grand Signor deprecated hostilities by a forcible and manly appeal to the justice and gratitude of the Emperor; but Joseph, eager to signalise his arms, and to share in the spoils of a feeble foe, published a declaration of war, in which he did not even attempt to varnish his

War between
Russia and
the Turks.

Conduct of
the Emperor
of Germany.

Dec. 2nd.

Attempt at
Belgrade.

1788.
Feb. 10.
Joseph's
declaration of
war.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1788.

Preparations
of Russia and
Germany.

aggression with the slightest colour of equity. He did not charge the Turks with a single infraction of the peace; he only justified his attack by pleading his engagements with the Empress, and inveighing against the obstinacy of the Porte in rejecting her demands*.

In making this war, Joseph's ambition grasped at the recovery of Bosnia and Servia, the acquisition of Moldavia and Wallachia, and the extension of his boundaries to the Dneister. To forward these projects, he assembled an army, greater than the House of Austria had ever yet brought into the field; a force of two hundred thousand men, with two thousand pieces of artillery. The Russians made equally formidable preparation; an army under Potemkin remained on the Bog, while others were stationed to co-operate with Prince Cobourg, to reduce Chotzim and to aid the main armies on the Sereth, the Pruth, and the Dneister. Bodies were also judiciously stationed in Transylvania and other parts; an armament in the Black Sea was intended to favour the progress of Potemkin; the Pacha of Scutari, persuaded by Joseph, had revolted; and it was hoped that the Venetians would be induced to engage in the war.

State of the
Porte.

Feeble and tottering in itself, and menaced thus by powerful and eager enemies, the Turkish government must have apprehended certain and speedy destruction; but unexpected incidents impeded the early operations of the imperial allies. Russia was engaged in a war with Sweden. Gustavus the Third, refusing to join in the darling hostility of the Empress, was, by her minister Rozamouski, insulted in his own capital; and attempts were made to excite rebellion, particularly in Finland. When the King, indignant at these proceedings, ordered Rozamouski to quit his dominions, the Russian answered by contumacious refusal and defiance†. Gustavus, thus provoked, formed an alliance

War with
Sweden.

* In this passage, I have copied the very words, as in the general narrative I have much relied on the sense, of Mr. Archdeacon Coxe.—Memoirs of the House of Austria, vol. iii. p. 614.

† The refractory Russian minister was expelled by the regency formed on the departure of the King for Finland. No force or violence was used, but a guard was placed on his house which prevented all egress, all access either for persons,

with the Turks, and received promises of countenance and support from other powers; he levied both maritime and land forces, and, notwithstanding the want of heavy artillery, which prevented him from forming a regular siege, proceeded to the attack of Frederickshelm. Terror and alarm spread rapidly through the Russian dominions, where the name of Charles the Twelfth still kept up a dread of Sweden; but the Empress, although her disposable military force was all employed against the Turks, collected, for her defence, soldiers from distant garrisons, invalids and new levies, and, far from losing her courage or presence of mind, directed an attack upon Finland. Her fleet, composed of seventeen sail of the line, including vessels of large size with guns of heavy metal, originally destined for the Mediterranean, still remained in the Baltic. The Swedish armament, commanded by the Duke of Sudermania, consisted of fifteen ships of the line, but none in size or power of artillery equal to those of the enemy. In this particular, his precipitancy in waging hostilities deprived Gustavus of many advantages.

His squadron had, for some time, sailed close up to Cronstadt, defying the Russians, who, at length, attempted an encounter; but their operations were delayed by an unforeseen incident. English officers, who had been engaged in the Empress's fleet, considered that their honour would be tarnished if they continued in a service where Paul Jones held a command, which, without their knowledge, had been conferred on him. This obstacle was speedily removed, and Jones was sent to a squadron on the Black Sea, where he acquired reputation, and received the order of Saint Anne; but, in consequence of an intrigue formed against him, was soon obliged to leave Russia, and retire, poor and unnoticed, into France*.

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LXIII.

1788.

The Russian
fleet in
Cronstadt.

letters, or provisions; and at length, thus degraded, Rozamouski gladly accepted the means offered for his departure.

* Castéra, vol. iii. p. 38. The account given by this author, in a note, is severe, but not altogether unjust. Ante, vol. iii. p. 65. For his own account of his transactions in Russia, and the causes of his quitting that country, see *Memoirs of Rear-Admiral Paul Jones*, in 2 vols. 8vo.; particularly vol. ii. He died on the 18th July, 1792.

CHAP.
LXIII.

 1788.
Sea fight off
Hoogland.
July 17.

When this difficulty had been surmounted, the Russian fleet, commanded by Admiral Greig, put to sea, and engaged in a severe, though not decisive, conflict, off Hoogland. The Swedes fought with the utmost obstinacy; both sides claimed the victory, but the Russians certainly had the advantage. Some officers in each fleet misconducted themselves; Gustavus forbore to punish; but Admiral Greig, with judicious firmness, caused two officers to be arrested and sent to Cronstadt, where they were punished with exemplary severity. The Swedish fleet was then blockaded at Sweaborg, and Russia remained undisturbed mistress of the adjacent sea, intercepting supplies, and capturing all vessels destined to succour her enemies.

 War in
Finland.

Attempts at negotiation were made, but failed, through the arrogant tone assumed, and the unreasonable demands made, by Sweden. General Mitchelson was called from the Turkish frontier to act against the Swedish troops in Finland; but had not the designs of Gustavus been thwarted by the misconduct of some of his commanders, he might have struck the Russian empire with terror, by advancing to St. Petersburg. His progress was impeded, not by the force or bravery of his opponents, but by flagrant and shameful perfidy. One of his officers, named Hostéko, refused, even in the field, to obey his orders, and made his own regiment ground their arms when the King commanded them to march. Gustavus, wanting energy to punish such treachery, was reduced to a state of inaction.

 Denmark
makes war on
Sweden.

Catherine now urged Denmark to arm on her side, according to existing treaties. She succeeded without much difficulty; her attempt being aided by a jealousy respecting the views and conduct of Sweden which had long prevailed at Copenhagen. Accordingly, while Gustavus was involved in his greatest embarrassments, a notice, amounting to a declaration of war, was issued by the Danes. A Norwegian army, under Prince Charles of Hesse, after a slight conflict, took Udewalla and other places, and laid siege to Gottenburg, the city next in importance to Stockholm. Gustavus immediately sent from his capital all the reinforcements he could collect, roused the spirit of his subjects in

August 19.

 Lays siege
to Gottenburg.

Dalecarlia, who instantly equipped an army of three thousand men, and, which was the most important and hazardous of his measures, repaired in person, unattended, to the besieged town. No notice having been given, he had some difficulty in obtaining admission, and had then the mortification to find that, either through feebleness or treachery, the governor had convoked the inhabitants and resolved to capitulate. It is probable that neither the presence of the sovereign nor the expected advance of the Dalecarlians would long have prevented the fall of the place, but for the interference of Mr. Elliot*, the British minister at Copenhagen. Viewing the existing crisis with the eye of a statesman, he crossed over to Sweden, and, after some correspondence, conducted, on his part, with equal ability, temper, and firmness, aided too by an envoy from Prussia, he obtained successive truces, preparatory to a peace, and, notwithstanding some inconsiderate displays of resentment on the part of Gustavus, Prince Charles retired into Norway, and every thing portended peace in this quarter.

Several actions, fought at this period, gave triumphs to the arms of Russia over the Turks. The Pacha of Oczakoff embarked in boats a body of six thousand troops to surprise the fortress of Kilburn where, unfortunately for them, Suwarrow commanded. He permitted them to land, and shewed signs of terror; but when, deceived by this feint, the boats had been ordered to return for a reinforcement, he made a sally, destroyed all the Turks by the sword or in the sea, and himself received a dangerous wound in the action.

Some unimportant naval actions were fought, to the disadvantage of the Turks, and, after a vigorous siege, and in the depth of winter, Prince Potemkin took Oczakoff by storm, and subjected the inhabitants to all the cruelties and horrors attendant on such an event. This conquest cost Russia twenty thousand men, of whom five thousand perished in the final assault†.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1788.

Oct. 3.

Interference
of the British
minister.

9th.

November.

The Turks
defeated near
Oczakoff.

Dec. 12.
Oczakoff taken
by storm.

* Afterward Sir Gilbert, and subsequently Lord Minto.

† Castera, tome iii. liv. 11.

CHAP.
LXIII.1788.
Proceedings of
Joseph II.

April 2nd.

25th.

Siege of
Belgrade.

If the King of Sweden derived no immediate personal advantage from the hostilities in which he engaged, they contributed, with other causes, to the general ill-success of his opponents in their campaign in another quarter. Joseph, naturally inert and indecisive, wasted the early months in expecting the junction and co-operation of the Prussians. His army, unprecedented in number and strength, was limited to small operations, to desultory attacks on petty posts near the frontier, and trifling expeditions to secure the banks of the Danube and the Save. He joined the army at a late period, accompanied by his favourite military counsellor, Marshal Lacey; and, having stormed Szabatch, formed the siege of Belgrade. His difficulties increased. England and Holland forbade their sailors entering into the Russian service; his great ally, as already has been stated, was fully occupied by her war with Sweden; Venice determined to be strictly neutral; and the Pacha of Scutari, alarmed at the perils he foresaw, massacred the Austrian officers whom he had received, and made full submission to his lawful sovereign.

The Emperor wasted his time until the cries of his own army, and a consciousness that he was disgracing himself in the eyes of Europe, roused him to some effort, and he began to press the siege. But, by this time, the Vizier Yussuff, who commanded the Turkish force judiciously posted in Bulgaria, had ceased to fear, and learned to defeat him. As the Vizier advanced toward Belgrade, the Emperor precipitately retreated behind the Save, while Yussuff threw bridges over the Danube at Cladova, broke the Austrian cordon, by defeating a corps under Wartensleben, posted on the heights of Meadia, spread alarm and devastation through the neighbouring districts of the Bannat, and threatened to pour his victorious troops into Hungary.

Marshal
Loudon
commands.

In this state of affairs, the Emperor hastened with forty thousand men to support General Wartensleben and cover Hungary, leaving the command in Croatia to Marshal Loudon, whom hitherto he had neither

countenanced nor consulted. The appointment of this brave and active officer was extremely gratifying both to the army and the people; in fact, their exultation was the bitterest satire on the Emperor himself. The progress of Loudon to the army resembled a triumph, and he justified the predilection that was expressed, by immediate operations of vigour. On the day after his arrival, he defeated the Turks under the walls of Dubitzza, and soon reduced the fortress; he then passed the Save, and, having fought some successful actions, invested Novi. Seven thousand Turks, who attempted to raise the siege, were defeated, and, after two assaults, the garrison capitulated. His further progress was impeded by the approach of winter.

During these transactions, the Prince of Cobourg, in conjunction with Soltikof, laid siege to Chotzim, anticipating an easy conquest; but, although the place was little capable of defence, the garrison displayed heroic firmness; they continued their resistance, even after the town was laid in ashes, the principal magazine destroyed, and famine and disease in all their horrors contributed to oppress them; and when, at last, the place surrendered, the season was spent, and the besiegers could undertake no further enterprise.

Whatever honour might be derived to the imperial arms from the conduct of Loudon and the Prince of Cobourg, the Emperor himself sullied them by continued misconduct. After his junction with Wartensleben, a council of war was called, at which all the officers, except Lacy, advised vigorous offensive proceedings; the Emperor adopted, as probably he had dictated, the cautious advice of Lacy. Encouraged by this timidity, the Turks, during two whole days and nights, attacked the Austrian camp. They were repulsed, but Joseph thought fit to make a retreat, so precipitate that the mistakes occasioned by a dark night converted it into a flight; the Emperor had nearly lost his life, and his honour was insulted by an ironical compliment from one of his own aides-de-

CHAP.
LXIII.

1788.

His
popularity.

August 26th.
Vigorous
operations.

Sep. 11th.
Captures
Novi.

Oct. 3rd.

Prince
Cobourg
captures
Chotzim.
July 20th.

Sep. 20th.

Unmilitary
conduct of
the Emperor.

Sep. 20th.

CHAP.
LXIII.

1788.

camp on the fleetness of his horse. The Vizier and the Austrians marched back to their former positions. No further action of importance took place, except the capture of Viplanka by a detachment under General Harrach; and this campaign, so great in expectation, so small in real achievement, was terminated by a truce for three months*.

* Coxe's House of Austria, chap. xlix.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FOURTH.

1788—1789.

Affairs of England.—The Duke of York—the Earl of Mansfield retires, succeeded by Lord Kenyon—contest for Westminster.—Illness of the King—his intellects affected.—Meeting of Parliament—the two Houses adjourn.—Privy Council—opinion of the physicians—they are examined by Committees.—Dr. Willis—their Report.—Mr. Pitt moves for a Committee in the House of Commons—observations of Mr. Fox—their effect—answer of Mr. Pitt—Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Burke—Mr. Pitt in reply to Mr. Burke.—Committees appointed.—Similar motions in the House of Lords by Earl Camden—Lord Loughborough—the Lord Chancellor.—Committees appointed.—Report from the Committee of the House of Commons.—Discussions renewed.—Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Sheridan—Mr. Pitt.—Discussions in the upper House introduced by Earl Fitzwilliam—Lord Chancellor.—Sentiments of the Prince of Wales, expressed by the Duke of York—Duke of Gloucester. Report of the Lords' Committee.—The House of Commons in a committee on the state of the nation.—Mr. Pitt moves resolutions.—Debate on the Prince's right.—Debate on bringing up the Report.—Amendment moved by Mr. Dempster—Mr. Burke—Lord North.—Amendment lost.—Conference.—Debate in the Lords.—Earl of Abercorn—Lord Rawdon.—Amendment moved.—Debate—Lost.—Protest.—Death of Mr. Cornwall, the Speaker.—Observations.—State of the King.—Mr. Pitt's letter to the Prince of Wales.—The Prince's answer.—Mr. Grenville chosen Speaker.—New inquiry into the state of the King's health. Examination of Physicians.—Report of the Committee.—

Observations of Mr. Burke—Mr. Pitt.—He moves his first resolution.—Mr. Powys.—Lord Belgrave.—Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Grenville.—Resolutions respecting the royal household debated.—Mr. Pitt.—Lord North attempts to divide the question.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Pitt.—Amendment moved.—Mr. Gray.—Mr. Dundas.—Lord North.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Pitt.—Resolutions carried.—Observations of Mr. Rolle on Mrs. Fitzherbert.—Debates in the House of Lords.—The Resolutions—Protest.—Conference.—Difficulties as to opening the Session.—Observations of Mr. Burke.—Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Burke.—Address to the Prince.—His Answer.—Address to the Queen.—Debate in the House of Lords on opening the Session.—Earl Camden.—Carried.—The Princes of the blood require their names to be withdrawn.—Commissions debated in the House of Commons.—Mr. Burke.—Opening of the session.—Regency bill.—Mr. Grey.—Mr. Burke.—Bill in the committee.—Mr. Burke—called to order—third reading—amendment as to creation of peers.—Bill in the House of Lords.—The King's convalescence announced.—Committee adjourned.

CHAP.
LXIV.

1788.
Affairs of
England.

The Duke of
York.

IN England some changes had taken place in the two Houses of Parliament. His Royal Highness Frederick, Bishop of Osnaburgh, his Majesty's second son, had completed his education and gained experience, particularly under the auspices of the late King of Prussia, who behaved toward him with great kindness, shewing a real admiration of his talents and regard for his person. His reception at Vienna had been equally honourable and cordial, the Emperor always treating him with regard and confidence*. He was successively appointed Captain and Colonel in the Horse-Guards, and Colonel of the Coldstream regiment of foot, and he had a peerage conferred on him, by the title of Duke of York and Albany†. After these honours had been bestowed, his Royal Highness

* Sir Robert Murray Keith to Lord Carmarthen, July 1784. State Papers.

† In December 1784.

was absent; he had returned to England, but had not yet taken his seat.

CHAP.
LXIV.

The venerable Earl of Mansfield vacated the high judicial post which he had so long occupied with honour to himself and with signal benefit to his country. His retreat was occasioned entirely by corporeal infirmities, and not by the decay of his mental faculties. He was succeeded by Sir Lloyd Kenyon, Master of the Rolls, who had before been created a Baronet, and was now raised to the peerage by the title of Lord Kenyon. The Attorney-general, Sir Richard Pepper Arden, was advanced to the station which Lord Kenyon had occupied; the office he vacated was conferred on Sir Archibald Macdonald, and Sir John Scott was appointed Solicitor-general.

1788.
The Earl of
Mansfield
retires.

June.
Succeeded by
Lord Kenyon.

In the course of the summer, Lord Hood, by accepting a seat at the Admiralty board, had occasioned a vacancy for Westminster. It was expected that, as he had before been the favourite candidate, he would be again returned without a struggle; but an opponent was suddenly produced in the person of Lord John Townshend, who, after a contest of fifteen days, resembling in every particular, except duration, the late celebrated conflict, was declared duly elected.

June.
Contest for
Westminster.

Before the close of the late session, the health of the King had been visibly impaired; but as no alarming symptoms were observed, quiet, abstinence from business, and the course generally adopted in bilious cases, were deemed sufficient. After the prorogation, his Majesty went to Cheltenham; but, finding no benefit from the medicinal waters, speedily returned. His disorder increased, and, was observed to affect his intellects; the regularity of the levees at St. James's was interrupted; and when, at length, he did make his appearance at one, his conversation and demeanour left no doubt of the nature of his malady. There was a period of fluctuation, of occasional paroxysms, succeeded by intervals of clear understanding and demonstrations of accurate perception and an undiminished power of reasoning; but soon, however, the paroxysms, accompanied with highly bilious affections, brought on

Illness of the
King.

Aug. 16
His intellects
affected.

Oct. 21.

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Oct. 25.

Nov. 11.

so violent a fever, that his Majesty became totally and constantly deprived of the use of reason, and his life was for several days in imminent danger*.

After some time, the King was removed from Kew to Windsor, where the physicians usually consulted by him† attended constantly; the Gazette formally announced his indisposition, and alarm and consternation were diffused in every quarter.

The Prince of Wales and the Duke of York became resident at Windsor; several of the ministers were frequently in conference with the physicians, and the Lord Chancellor had interviews with the heir apparent. Some leading members of the opposition party were also consulted by the Princes; but Mr. Fox, their great chief, being absent on a continental tour, an express was dispatched to solicit his return. He was met with at Bologna, whence he intended proceeding to Rome; but he returned with an extraordinary speed, making a journey of more than eight hundred miles in nine days. The opposition party did not conceal their exultation at the probable change which they expected from the attachment of the heir apparent, while the friends of ministers expressed confident hopes of his Majesty's speedy re-establishment.

Meeting of
Parliament.

It had been the intention of ministers to defer the meeting of Parliament until after Christmas; but as the term of prorogation expired, and there was no competent authority to extend it, and as many members were arrived in town, anxious for the important crisis, the two Houses assembled on the day prefixed; but they met only to adjourn. The Lord Chancellor stated that he had usually, by the King's command, summoned the peers to convene for dispatch of business; but that was now become impossible. On the motion of Earl Camden, the House adjourned

Nov. 20.

* Tomline's *Life of Pitt*, vol. ii. p. 108. In whatever relates personally to the King at this crisis, I have drawn my information principally from this work: I have also consulted "*Histoire de ce qui s'est passé pour l'établissement d'un Régence, par M. L. Dutens.*"

† Sir George Baker, Dr. Heberden, Dr. Warren, Dr. Reynolds, and Sir Lucas Pepys; and Dr. Addington occasionally.

for fourteen days, and, in the mean time, the Lord Chancellor was directed to send letters of summons to each peer. In the House of Commons, a similar adjournment was voted on the motion of Mr. Pitt, with the addition, that there should be a call of the House.

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The two
Houses
adjourn.

Before the appointed day, a Privy Council was held, at which all members, without distinction of party, assisted. By their order, the physicians who had attended his Majesty were examined on oath, and the result of their answers was, that the King's indisposition rendered him incapable of meeting his Parliament, and of attending to public business; that there was a fair probability of his recovery, but it was impossible to fix any time when it might be expected.

Dec. 3rd.
Privy Council.

Opinion of the
physicians.

Both Houses considered that the information on which their future proceedings were to be founded, should be given directly to them, and each House appointed a committee to examine physicians. These inquiries were not confined to those who had before given their opinions; but others were also called in, and, among them, one whose testimony in the present, and whose care and judgment at a subsequent period, operated powerfully on the public opinion, and was supposed most materially to influence the final event of the royal malady. This was Dr. Francis Willis, a clergyman of the Church of England, endowed with a considerable living in the metropolis; but, having taken his degree, at Oxford, in medicine, he had long practised as a physician; and, during the last twenty-eight years, had received in his asylum at Gretford, in Lincolnshire, upward of eight hundred lunatic patients.

Dec. 4th to
11th.
They are ex-
amined by
committees.

Dr. Willis.

All the physicians agreed in the King's present incapacity, and in the hope of his recovery. From information, they ascribed his malady to over great anxiety in public affairs, exercise too violent, abstemiousness too rigid, and too little repose, which had induced a fever on the brain. The hopes of recovery were founded on his Majesty's not having, before the attack, been subject to any melancholy, and on the

December
10th—11th.
Report of
physicians.

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observation of all the physicians that a great majority (Dr. Willis said nine in ten) of patients so afflicted had perfectly recovered. The same learned and experienced physician said that, in the case of any other patient, he should scarcely entertain a doubt; but the King, by reflections on an illness of this kind, might depress his spirits and retard his cure. As to the probable period of his Majesty's convalescence, they differed materially. The major part declined answering questions as to time, but evidently shewed gloomy rather than cheerful indications. Dr. Addington, Sir Lucas Pepys, and Dr. Willis, equally declined fixing a time; but their answers were, on the whole, consolatory: eighteen months or two years was the longest known duration of such maladies; but, under favourable circumstances, they ended in six weeks or two months; and, although his Majesty could not be called convalescent, favourable hopes were augured from the ameliorations in his condition, the general absence of irritation, the improved state of his appetite, and the duration and tranquillity of his repose*.

Dec. 10th.
Mr. Pitt moves
for a committee
in the House
of Commons.

When the report was submitted to the House of Commons, Mr. Pitt, opposing a motion of Mr. Rolle for delay, until it should be printed, moved for a committee to examine and report precedents of proceedings where the personal exercise of the royal authority had been prevented or interrupted, by infancy, sickness, infirmity, or otherwise. Their duty, he observed, required that, with all possible dispatch, and in the most respectful manner, they should take such necessary steps to provide for the present serious situation of affairs, to guard the liberties of the people, and so to

* For the examinations, see the Debates and Lords' Journals, vol. xxxviii. p. 271. Commons' Journals, vol. xlv. p. 6. During this period a difficulty occurred with respect to the House of Commons itself. Sir Edmund Affleck, the member for Colchester, died, and the Speaker expressed a doubt whether, during the inefficiency of one branch of the legislature, he could issue a warrant to fill up the vacancy. Mr. Pitt was decidedly of opinion that, although no act could take place which required the concurrence of the different branches of the legislature, yet each of them, in its separate capacity, was fully competent to the exercise of those powers which concerned its own orders and jurisdiction. No objection was offered to this opinion, and the warrant issued accordingly.

secure the safety of the country, that his Majesty might have the gratification of knowing, when the happy moment of his recovery should arrive, that the people whom he had loved and protected, had suffered as little as possible by his illness.

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Mr. Fox, who had before appeared in his place, evidently depressed by the fatigues of his late journey, now said the exigency was so pressing, that he, for one, would dispense with the Committee. What were they going to search for? Not precedents upon their journals, not parliamentary precedents, but precedents in the History of England. At present there was a person in the kingdom, different from any other; to whom no precedents could refer—an heir apparent, of full age and capacity to exercise the royal power. The examination of physicians had put the House in full possession of the true state of the King's health; through them it was known to the nation at large, and it was then their only duty to decide without the loss of a single moment. In his firm opinion, his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales had as clear, as express a right to assume the reins of government, and exercise the power of sovereignty, during the continuance of the King's illness and incapacity, as in the case of his Majesty's natural demise. His Royal Highness might have advanced this claim himself, but he chose rather to wait the decision of Parliament, with a patient and due deference to the constitution, than to urge a claim that, he trusted, a majority in that House, and of the people at large, admitted; and which he was persuaded, could not be reasonably disputed.

Observations
of Mr. Fox.

As the leader of a political party, Mr. Pitt saw, with pleasure, the advantage he should derive from many parts of this speech. The broad assertion of a right in the Prince of Wales to assume the functions of regent appeared to be unsupported by any declaration of law, and not countenanced by any analogy. Thus the leader of opposition, by affirming that the Prince ought to assume the office, without restrictions, exposed himself and his adherents to the suspicion of

Their effect.

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Answer of
Mr. Pitt.

aspiring to power, which, by abuse, they could render permanent, notwithstanding the King's recovery*.

In his answer, Mr. Pitt used the advantage afforded him without reserve. Whatever might be thought of Mr. Fox's penetration and discernment, his acquaintance with the laws and general history of the country, and his knowledge of the theory of the constitution, he defied all his ingenuity to support his opinion upon any analogy of constitutional precedent, or to reconcile it to the spirit and genius of the constitution. The doctrine was itself, if any additional reason were necessary, the strongest and most unanswerable for appointing the committee. If a claim of right was intimated (even though not formally) on the part of the Prince of Wales, to assume the government, it became of the utmost consequence to ascertain, from precedent and history, whether this claim was founded; which, if it was, precluded the House from the possibility of all deliberation on the subject. In the mean time, he maintained, that it would appear, from every precedent and from every page of history, that to assert such a right in the Prince of Wales, or any one else, independent of the decision of the two Houses of Parliament, was little less than treason to the constitution. He pledged himself to this assertion, that, in the case of an interruption of the personal exercise of the royal authority, when there had been no previous lawful provision for carrying on the government, it belonged to the other branches of the legislature, on the part of the nation at large, the body they represented, to provide, according to their discretion, for the temporary exercise of sovereign authority, in the name and on behalf of the King, and that, except by their decision, the Prince of Wales

* Tomline, vol. ii. p. 117. A writer of a Biographical Memoir thus describes the conduct and feeling of the minister on this occasion: "During the delivery of this adventurous opinion, the countenance of Mr. Pitt was seen to brighten with exultation at the mistake into which he perceived his adversary was hurrying; and scarcely had the sentence, just quoted, been concluded, when, slapping his thigh triumphantly, he turned to the person who sat next to him, and said, 'I'll unwhig the gentleman for the rest of his life!'" And the author adds, in the next paragraph, that this anecdote is undoubtedly true. Biographical Memoirs of the Right Honourable Richard Brinsley Sheridan, by Thomas Moore, Esq. vol. ii. p. 38, 8vo.

had no more right (speaking of strict right) to assume the government, than any other individual subject. However strong the argument might be in favour of the Prince of Wales, it did not affect the question of right; because neither the whole nor any part of the royal authority could belong to him in the present circumstances, unless conferred by Parliament.

Mr. Fox complained that he had been, unintentionally no doubt, misrepresented and unjustly charged with treason to the constitution. The word Parliament was used in an improper sense when applied to two branches only of the legislature; and he doubted whether, under the present circumstances, the house to which he was then speaking was really a house of parliament. Mr. Pitt briefly re-stated the point on which he was at issue with the leader of opposition. To make a provision, he said, for the executive power of the government, during the interruption of the personal exercise of the royal authority, did rest with the remaining branches of the legislature. It was a matter entirely in their discretion. Mr. Fox, on the contrary, if he understood him rightly, had maintained that the two houses had no such discretion; but that his Royal Highness could claim the exercise of sovereign power, so as to supersede the right of either house to deliberate on the subject.

At this period Mr. Burke arose, and expressed astonishment at the style and manner in which the minister had debated the question, which most peculiarly required temper and moderation. He had burst into a flame; he had fallen into a fury; and, with unpardonable violence, had accused others of treason, because they ventured to mention the rights of any part of the royal family; thus endeavouring to intimidate his opponents by threatening them with the lash of the law. Where was the freedom of debate, where was the privilege of Parliament, if the rights of the Prince of Wales could not be spoken of without subjecting members to a charge of treason by one of the Prince's competitors? A cry of order being heard in the house, Mr. Burke said, he would repeat and justify

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his words. The right honourable gentleman had no pressly declared, that the Prince of Wales had ex- more right to claim the exercise of the sovereign power than any other individual subject; he was warranted, therefore, in stating that he had described himself as one of the Prince's competitors. If the Prince of Wales had no more right than any other person, and if he were to give an elective vote, it should be in favour of that Prince whose amiable disposition was one of his many recommendations; and not in favour of a Prince who charged the assertors of the right and claim of the Prince of Wales with constructive treason.

Mr. Pitt in
reply to Mr.
Burke.

This strained attempt to place Mr. Pitt in invidious and personal contest with the heir apparent was not well received by any portion of the House; and, as Mr. Burke delivered his speech with his usual vehemence and animation, the matter and the manner of it afforded the minister easy and secure topics of reply. He observed, that if the right honourable gentleman who had condescended to be the advocate and the specimen of moderation, had found any warmth in his manner of speaking before, which led him to think that he had not considered what he said, he was ready to repeat it with all possible coolness, and knew not one word that he would retract. And, when he had said that the Prince of Wales had no more right to urge such a claim than any other individual subject, he appealed to the House upon the decency of charging him with arrogating to be the competitor of his Royal Highness. At that period of our history when the constitution was settled on its present foundation, when Mr. Somers and other great men declared that no person had a right to the crown independently of the consent of the two Houses, would it have been thought fair or decent for any member of either House to pronounce Mr. Somers a personal competitor of William the Third?

Committee ap-
pointed.

The Committee was voted without a division, and composed of members taken from both sides of the House.

This debate had material influence on that which took place on the following day in the House of Lords, when Earl Camden moved for a similar committee. He had heard, he said, of an idea started in another place, alleged to be founded on common law, and on the spirit of the constitution, that the heir apparent, being of age, had a claim to assume the regal authority, and take upon himself the administration of government, as a matter of right, during the incapacity of his Majesty. If this was the common law, it was a secret to him: he never before had met with it in any writer, or heard it laid down by any lawyer. A doctrine so new and extraordinary ought to have been well considered before it was uttered; because such opinions were much sooner raised than laid, and might involve the country in infinite confusion.

Lord Loughborough said he had heard of another most extraordinary assertion, boldly, arrogantly, and presumptuously made elsewhere; that the Prince of Wales, the heir apparent to the throne, had no more right, under the present circumstances, to take upon himself the government, than any other individual subject. This assertion was founded on the idea that the regency was elective, which, he maintained, could not be the case. Were it so, the heir apparent had no such right. The two Houses might set up a pageant of a regent, and, in fact, assume the government themselves, because such a regent must necessarily be the slave of the electors. The only instance of a regent created by the two Houses, without regard to the heir apparent, was that of the Duke of York to be protector, in the reign of Henry the Sixth, which led to the well-known, calamitous civil wars. Had the Prince of Wales had no more right than any other individual subject? No more right! Was the Prince of Wales a common subject? Did not the law describe him to be one and the same with the King? Lord Coke expressly stated it so. Was it not as much high treason to compass or imagine the death of the Prince of Wales as the death of the King. Was it high treason to compass or imagine the death of any other indivi-

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11th.
Similar motion
in the House of
Lords, by Earl
Camden.

Lord Lough-
borough.

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Lord
Chancellor.Committee
appointed.Report to the
House of
Commons.
12th.
Discussion
renewed.

Mr. Fox.

dual subject? The regency was hereditary, not elective; and the heir apparent had now a right to assume the reins of government. He did not mean that the Prince could violently rush into authority; but that, upon the authentic notification of the King's unfortunate incapacity to the two Houses, he ought, of right, to be invested with the exercise of the royal power.

The Lord Chancellor regretted that the topics so prematurely discussed had not been reserved until a later stage of the proceeding, when, probably, little difference of opinion would have existed. The declarations of law made by Lord Loughborough was to him perfectly new. In the eye of the law, the Prince of Wales and the King were one and the same! to consider them so, was to force a literal meaning upon a metaphorical expression. His Royal Highness, however peculiarly distinguished by his rank, birth, and dignities, above all other subjects, was still a subject.

After a few other observations, a committee of twenty-one was appointed.

The report from the Committee of the House of Commons was speedily presented, laid on the table, and printed; but when Mr. Pitt moved that, on a future day, the House should resolve itself into a Committee on the state of the nation, Mr. Fox complained,—which, he said, he had never done before,—of misrepresentation of his sentiments, and denied having spoken from the authority of any person, much less from that of the Prince. He had merely delivered his own opinion, as an individual member, freely and without any authority. He now re-stated, explained, and vindicated it from misconceptions in the House of Lords, and in other quarters. What he meant to assert was, that the Prince had the right, but not the possession; he would not exercise the right without appealing to the two Houses. It was admitted that the Prince had an irresistible claim, which Parliament could not reject or refuse, without forfeiting their duty to the constitution. To that idea he had no objection, because he knew no difference between an irresistible claim and an inherent right. If the Prince

of Wales had done him the honour to consult him, he should have advised a message to either or to both Houses, stating his claim, and calling for their decision. Such, however, was his Royal Highness's forbearance, that he would prefer no claim, but wait patiently and with due deference, conscious that the two Houses ought, by acknowledging the justice of that claim, to restore the royal authority. He urged the right of the Prince as an abstract point: but of what importance were differences upon abstract points, where the substance was indisputable? Although unused to meet the minister on any but adverse ground, he expressed a hope that he would afford some general outline of what he meant to state to the Committee, that members might not be puzzled with the novelty of propositions, and embarrassed in giving their votes.

Mr. Pitt said they had just received a voluminous report from the Committee appointed to search for precedents, and he had moved to refer it, with the examination of the physicians, to the committee on the state of the nation, where all topics would undergo ample discussion. He then controverted all the material assertions of Mr. Fox, denying, most explicitly, that the whole or any part of the regal power vested in the Prince of Wales as a matter of right, although he was equally ready to say, that, on the ground of expediency, it was highly desirable that whatever part of the regal power it was necessary to exercise during this unhappy interval, should be vested in a single person, and that person should be the Prince of Wales. He also stated his opinions as to the portion of political power to be given, and the restrictions to be imposed, with a frankness which Mr. Fox acknowledged to be satisfactory, and more than he had a right to expect.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Sheridan deprecated all discussion of the Prince's rights. It could not conciliate; it might create dissensions and animosities; and he even intimated that it might lead to dangerous consequences.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Pitt trusted that, in the discussion of these opinions, the House would do their duty, in spite of any

Mr. Pitt.

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Discussion
introduced by
Earl Fitz-
william.

15th.

Lord Chan-
cellor.Sentiments of
the Prince
expressed by
the Duke of
York.

threat, however high the authority from which it might proceed. The committee was voted without a division.

In consequence of the discussions to which Mr. Fox had alluded, which were conducted with great heat and asperity, not only in newspapers, but in pamphlets, in conversation, and in public speeches, Earl Fitzwilliam, first apologizing for introducing a conversation when he did not intend to make a motion, deprecated, in strong and feeling language, all debate in that place, on a topic so delicate and invidious, and tending only to increase the alarm and uneasiness which already had been manifested. The Lord Chancellor declared that, when the committee should have made its report, the House would see what further steps should be taken to restore vigour and efficacy to the executive government; and, above all things, they should take care faithfully to preserve the rights of the King entire, so that when God should permit him to recover, he might not find his situation worse than it had been before his infirmity. His own sorrow was aggravated by a recollection of the marks of indulgence he had been in the habit of receiving from his now suffering sovereign: his debt of gratitude was ample for the many favours which he had graciously conferred on him; and "when I "forget my King," he exclaimed, "may God forget me."

But the chief, or indeed only cause for commencing the discussion, was, that the lords might hear, in an authentic form, a declaration of the opinions of the Prince himself. This was afforded by his royal brother, the Duke of York, who, presenting himself, for the first time, to Parliament, modestly urged that as an apology for defects. He entirely agreed with the noble Earl and other lords who expressed their wishes to avoid any question which tended to induce a debate on the rights of the Prince. No claim of right had been made on his part; and he understood too well the sacred principles which seated the House of Brunswick on the throne, ever to assume or exercise any power, whatever might be his claim, unless derived from the will of the people, expressed by their lordships in Parliament.

This speech, delivered with much grace and propriety, produced great effect, and was warmly complimented by the Lord Chancellor and Lord Camden. The Duke of Gloucester expressed similar sentiments: he trusted that the good sense and loyalty of a majority in each House would yet prevent the threatened discussion. Perseverance in it was highly mischievous, and could not be meant for the public good. If the attempt were persisted in, he feared he could not, such were his feelings, trust himself to speak his sentiments on the extraordinary conduct of those who would unnecessarily compel a decision on so delicate a question.

On this day, the House of Lords had been more than usually crowded with strangers, particularly of the House of Commons, whom the adjournment permitted to attend. Great curiosity was excited by the knowledge that the heir apparent intended to deliver his sentiments; and great surprise was created by the speech of the Lord Chancellor, who was known to have concluded a treaty at Carlton House, by virtue of which he was to retain his office, and to forward the claims of the Prince.

On the following day, the Report of the Committee was produced and ordered to lie on the table. It was of considerable length, like that of the lower House, consisting of precedents, in the original Norman-french, Latin, and English languages, of proceedings and statutes made on several occasions where the incapacity or absence of the monarch required a temporary substitution of authority. It was methodically arranged, under the several heads of infancy; sickness or infirmity; absence, where the remedy had been provided by the sovereign; absence, where the remedy had been provided by the great council of the nation, or the two Houses of Parliament; and cases not falling within either of those descriptions*.

In the committee on the state of the nation, Mr. Pitt moved three resolutions, introducing them with a long and luminous speech. Great as was the question,

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Duke of
Gloucester.

16th. 1788
Report of the
Lords'
Committee.

Committee on
the state of the
nation.

* See the Reports; Lords' Journals, vol. xxxviii. p. 276; Commons' Journals, vol. xlv. p. 11.

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Mr. Pitt moves
resolutions.

“What provision ought to be made for supplying the “deficiency?” there was a question of a greater and still more important nature, which must be discussed and decided first, namely, whether any person had a right either to assume or to claim the exercise of the royal authority during the King’s incapacity; or, whether it was the right of the Lords and Commons to provide for the deficiency in the legislature. In refutation of any claim existing in any person, he argued at great length, both from the precedents found in the report, and general principles of law and reason, and concluded by moving, That the King was, by his present indisposition, prevented from attending personally to public business.

That it was the right and duty of the Lords and Commons to provide the means for supplying this defect, according to the exigency of the case.

And that the two Houses should determine on the means by which the royal assent might be given to bills respecting the exercise of the powers and authorities of the Crown, during the King’s indisposition.

Debates on the
Prince’s right.

The first proposition being evident, met with unanimous assent. The debate on the second was long and animated; the Master of the Rolls, the Attorney-general, the Solicitor-general, and the Lord Advocate of Scotland strenuously asserting the right of the two Houses, and denying that any right was inherent in the Prince of Wales. Mr Fox, on the other hand, in a long and argumentative speech, defended the proposition he had formerly advanced, and insisted, even to the extreme, on the right for which he had contended. A middle party deprecated the discussion of the right, and favoured an amendment suggested by Mr. Bastard, for omitting that word in the resolution, and stating it only to be the duty of Parliament. Lord North spoke in favour of this plan of forbearance; but the Lord Advocate declared he could not discover how the general question of right could be waived, unless both Houses were ready to resolve that the Prince of Wales should not only be regent, but invested with the royal powers without limitation or distinction.

On a division, the majority in favour of the minister was sixty-four*.

Two days were fully occupied in debating the motion that the Report of the Committee should be brought up. The topics of discussion had already been so much exhausted, that little remained for the speakers but to profess unaltered opinions, to introduce new illustrations, or to animadvert on assertions in former debates. The principal persons who distinguished themselves in opposition to the measure were Sir Grey Cooper, Mr. Windham, and Mr. Anstruther. On the other side were the Attorney-general, Mr. Hardinge, and Mr. Beaufoy. Mr. Dempster unsuccessfully moved that the word "right" should be expunged; and that in the third resolution an address to the Prince of Wales should be voted, instead of expressing the determination of the House.

On this proposition lay the main stress of the debate. Mr. Burke attacked the resolution with all the force of his eloquence and all the vigour of his wit, not unmingled with some of those coarse illustrations to which he often descended, and which are ever unfortunate in a speaker of the higher class, as they give opportunities to those who could never presume to meet him in full career, to irritate him by repetitions, allusions, and parodies, and to diminish the reputation of his strength by an ostentatious display of his infirmities. Thus, in treating on a suggestion that the Lord Chancellor should officially affix the great seal to a commission for giving the royal assent to the intended bills, he said, "If we are to fight against the Crown, let us fight against it fairly; when the monarch is seated on the throne, the contest may be fair; then we act manfully: but what is to be done when the Crown is in a 'deliquium?' We are told to take a man with a large black brow and a big wig; he is a fit person; trust none of the royal family, for they will all rob the Crown, because they are the relatives of the sovereign; and, in order to fix a proper and

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Debate on the
bringing up
the Report.
19th.

Amendment
moved by
Mr. Dempster.

22nd.
Mr. Burke.

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“legal sanction upon our proceedings, we will give a “fictitious consent to our own acts.” He did not approve, he said, of any robbery, whether it were house-breaking, highway-robbery, or any other felony; yet each of them, in his opinion, was more excusable than law forgery. “I have given my allegiance,” he added, “already to the House of Hanover. I worship the “gods of our glorious constitution; but I will not “worship Priapus.”

Fully avowing his concurrence in the opinion of Mr. Fox respecting the Prince’s rights, he reprobated the manner in which it had been made the subject of animadversion. In assigning to one word of his so much importance, they had indeed paid a compliment, and presented him with a dish, on which the most gluttonous appetite might feed to satiety.

In a happier strain, he analyzed the historical precedents and disapproved of any restrictions on the Regent. It had been remarked that we had a weak government: it was so in two ways; for one king was disabled by nature, and another by art. Upon what principle could ministers elect the Prince, if they suspected him? and, if they did not suspect him, why did they wish to limit or restrict him? Were it possible for the Sovereign to be made acquainted with the present situation of affairs, he would feelingly exclaim,

“Upon my head they plac’d a fruitless crown,
“And put a barren sceptre in my gripe,
“Thence to be wrench’d with an unlineal hand,
“No son of mine succeeding.”

He would then add, “Restore me to my former “state and opinion. Do not let me see a black-brow’d “phantom on my throne!”

Lord North.

In explaining what he considered a misrepresentation by the Solicitor-general of an argument which he had used on a former day, Lord North compared the conduct of the House to that of the plaintiff in the celebrated cause of Stradling against Styles, reported by the learned Scriblerus, who, when a testator had bequeathed to him all his black and white horses,

claimed the black because they were black, the white because they were white, and the pied horses because they were both black and white. "In like manner," he said, "do the advocates for the present question argue, "when they maintain that the three estates of Parliament will be perfected by adopting the third resolution. First, they act as a House of Commons; secondly, as a House of Lords; then, like the black and white horses, they act both as Lords and Commons; and from this strange combination the third estate is created, which is to give life and vigour to "all their operations." He drew a distinction between the present times and those from which the precedents had been drawn. The pageants and puppets of those days were surely very different from the Duke of York and the Duke of Gloucester in ours. The precedents which had been brought before them ought to put them on their guard, lest they themselves should furnish posterity with a lesson which might one day prove fatal to the constitution. The House was now assembled to supply the defect in the exercise of the executive power which his Majesty's unfortunate disorder had occasioned; and the question was, what form should they adopt? He thought that the care of the royal person should not be vested in the Regent, whoever he might be; such a sacred trust should be watched with the most jealous eye, and guarded by the most vigorous and faithful arm. In conclusion, he called the attention of the House to the Prince of Wales, who, by his distinguished moderation and forbearance, had, in a peculiar degree, entitled himself to the confidence and affection of Parliament. They could not, in their present circumstances, proceed in any other mode than by address; if they adopted the measure proposed in the resolution, they would shake to its centre the fabric of the constitution.

Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, and many other members, spoke with great ability, but chiefly in recapitulation or defence of their former opinions. On a division, the amendment was lost, and the original question carried by a majority of seventy-three*.

Amendment
lost.

* 251 to 178.

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LXIV.

1788.

23rd.
Conference.
Debate in the
Lords.26th.
Earl of
Abercorn.
Lord Rawdon.Amendment
moved.

Debate.

Lost.

29th.
Protest.30th.
Death of the
Speaker.

Observations.

In a conference with the Lords, the resolutions of the lower House were agreed to ; but the approbation of the general body of Peers was not obtained without long and anxious debates ; first in the committee, and then in the House.

With vehement asperity and personality, the Earl of Abercorn assailed the doctrine of the Prince's right, while Lord Rawdon repeated a former declaration, that personally and singly, if necessary, he would stand forward, and take the sense of their Lordships on that question ; and he moved, as an amendment to the first resolution, " That an address be presented to the Prince of Wales, praying him to take upon himself, as sole regent, the administration of the executive government, in the King's name, during the continuance of his Majesty's indisposition."

In the debate, the original resolutions were defended by Earl Camden, the Duke of Richmond, Lord Hawkesbury, the Marquis of Lansdowne and the Lord Chancellor. The amendment was sustained by Lord Stormont, Lord Porchester, the Earl of Carlisle, and Lord Loughborough. It cannot be said that their Lordships' speeches, ample and able as many of them were, contained no new matter ; but it would be difficult to describe them as original and striking, although many of them abound in sound reasoning and apt illustration. The majority against the amendment was thirty-three*. The other resolutions passed without a division.

On bringing up the report, the resolutions were debated and agreed to. A protest was signed by forty-eight peers, having at their head the Royal Dukes of York and Cumberland, who had also been in the minority on the late division.

At this period, a short interval was occasioned in the proceedings by the death of Mr. Cornwall, the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Six weeks had elapsed since the meeting of Parliament, and, notwithstanding the eagerness and vehemence which had been displayed, few satisfactory

general conclusions had been obtained. The opposition party appeared to act on no fixed principles, and under no governing mind. The strong declaration made by Mr. Fox, which created so much discussion, and in the public opinion wrought such irreparable injury, was entirely uncalled for, and any direction to advance such a claim for the Prince of Wales had been on his part entirely disavowed. The violence of the party was generally ascribed to their eager desire of office; and yet, in many points, their conduct seemed incompatible with such a supposition. The repeated and lengthened debates on the question of right, even after the claim had been disavowed, and some other minor delays, were all attributable to those whose interest seemed to point at an early termination of the question, on whatever terms. But secret intrigues and manœuvres within the walls of Carlton House were believed, and publicly asserted, to actuate some of the Prince's friends, while to others they were highly displeasing.

Nor were ministers, although they appeared to be firmly united, and were certainly most powerfully supported by the public voice, free from such disquietudes as their situation must necessarily occasion. Their removal from office was to be the assured result of the appointment of a regent; and they had much occasion to feel that, in such circumstances, pride, ingratitude, and selfishness, would produce their usual, or, as they may be called, natural, effects. Even the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, is said to have been in a negotiation with the Prince's party, which only failed because his views of ambition could not be reconciled with those of Lord Loughborough. Whatever conduct he may have pursued under the influence of ambition, Lord Thurlow was a well-wisher to all the royal family; and on the first announcement of the King's malady, counselled the heir apparent to use strict forbearance, and await the course of events. Whether his Royal Highness might or might not have followed this advice cannot be known; but, the measures of Mr. Fox, after his return from the continent, assumed a very differ-

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ent aspect*. Over him Lord Loughborough exercised considerable influence; and the enfeebled state of his health probably rendered him more subservient to the views of another than he would have been in a perfect state of unimpaired energy of body and mind. The voice of the people was strongly expressed in favour of the minister. Petitions to Parliament, expressing disapprobation of the manner of appointing a regent, were presented from the counties of Northumberland and Southampton, and from Westminster; while, on the other hand, the City of London voted thanks to Mr. Pitt and the other members of Parliament, who had maintained the rights of the legislature and the people; addresses were received by Mr. Pitt from a considerable number of counties and towns, in decided approbation of his conduct, and of the principles to which, upon his proposal, Parliament had given sanction. The assertion of the Prince of Wales's right to exercise all the powers of royalty, while his father was upon the throne, and labouring under only a temporary incapacity, had excited serious alarm in every part of the country; and, from a warm and generous feeling of loyalty and affection to the King, and a rooted distrust of those who were likely to be the ministers of the Regent, a sincere anxiety prevailed, that, in providing for the present exigency, no unnecessary power should be given; and that especial care should be taken to enable his Majesty, whenever the happy moment of his recovery should arrive, to re-assume his authority, without embarrassment or difficulty†.

State of the
King.

Meanwhile, the royal patient had been removed from Windsor to Kew, that his medical advisers might have easy access to his person. Dr. Willis, who was in constant attendance, while the other physicians only visited occasionally, had totally changed their plan of proceeding, and had, by his care, vigilance, and zeal, gained the entire confidence of the Queen; and

* Nicholls's Recollections, vol. i. p. 70.

† Annual Register, vol. xxxi. p. 104. Tomline's Life of Pitt, vol. ii. p. 151.

the public, cheered by information of the partial success of his measures, looked up to him as their surest hope for the happy event of the royal restoration.

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When the questions on the regency had been discussed to the extent already described, Mr. Pitt addressed a letter on the subject, to the Prince of Wales. He had, not long before, written to his Royal Highness, in consequence of Lord Thurlow having received a letter from the Prince, shewing that the speeches and conduct of the minister had been much misrepresented; and he explained fully, and in dutiful terms, his principles and intentions. To this he received no answer*.

30th.
Mr. Pitt's
letter to the
Prince of
Wales.

15th.

In his present letter, the minister, in respectful language, described the plan which it was conceived proper to propose. "It is the humble opinion of ministers," he said, "that your Royal Highness should be empowered to exercise the royal authority, in the name and on behalf of his Majesty, and to do all acts which might legally be done by him; with provisions nevertheless, that the care of the King's person, the management of his household, including the direction and appointment of the officers and servants, should be reserved to the Queen, under proper regulations. That the power to be exercised by your Royal Highness should not extend to disposing of the King's real or personal property (except in the renewal of leases), to the granting of any office in reversion, or for any other term than during his Majesty's pleasure, any pension or any office, except those which must be granted for life, or during good behaviour, nor to bestowing the dignity of peerage on any but his Majesty's issue, having attained the age of twenty-one years. These ideas had occurred to ministers," he added, "on the supposition that his Majesty's illness might not be of long duration; but, should it unfortunately be protracted, Parliament might re-consider these provisions, whenever it might be requisite."

30th.

* See the letter. Tomline, vol. ii. p. 127. Parliamentary History, vol. xxvii. p. 909. Annual Register, vol. xxxi. p. 298. State Papers.

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1788.
 The Prince's
 answer.

To this letter, his Royal Highness returned a prompt, firm, and dignified answer. He excused himself from animadverting on any thing which had already passed in Parliament; but as a plan had been submitted to him before any discussion had taken place, he felt obliged to notice it, as his silence might otherwise be construed into acquiescence. He had not expected that a “plan should be offered to “his consideration, by which government was to be “rendered difficult, if not impracticable, in the hands “of any person intended to represent the King’s authority, much less in the hands of his eldest son—the “heir apparent of his kingdoms, and the person most “bound to the maintenance of his Majesty’s just “prerogatives and authority, as well as most interested “in the happiness, the prosperity, and the glory of “his people. It is with deep regret,” he proceeded, “that the Prince makes the observation, that he sees, “in the contents of that paper, a project for producing weakness, disorder, and insecurity in every “branch of the administration of affairs. A project “for dividing the royal family from each other, for “separating the court from the state, and thereby disjoining government from its natural and accustomed “support. A scheme disconnecting the authority to “command service, from the power of animating it by “reward; and for allotting to the Prince all the invidious duties of government, without the means of “softening them to the public, by any act of grace, “favour, or benignity. The Prince’s feelings, on contemplating this plan, are also rendered still more “painful, by observing, that it is not founded on any “general principle, but calculated to infuse jealousies and distrust (wholly groundless, he trusts) in that “quarter, whose confidence it will ever be the first “pride of his life to merit and obtain. With regard “to the motive and object of the limitations and restrictions proposed, the Prince can have but little to “observe. No light or information is afforded him on “those points. Ministers have informed him what “the powers are which they mean to refuse him; not

“ why they are withheld. If security for his Majesty’s re-possessing his rightful government, whenever it shall please Providence, in bounty, to remove the calamity with which he is afflicted, be any part of the object of this plan, the Prince has only to be convinced that any measure is necessary, or even conducive to that end, to be the first to urge it, as the preliminary and permanent consideration of any settlement in which he could consent to share.” Upon that part of the plan which regards the King’s real and personal property, he said, “ the Prince feels himself compelled to remark that it was not necessary for Mr. Pitt, nor yet proper, to suggest the restraint he proposes against the Prince’s granting away the King’s real or personal property. The Prince does not conceive that, during the King’s life, he is, by law, entitled to make any such grant; and he is sure that he has never shewn the smallest inclination to possess any such power. But it remains with Mr. Pitt to consider the eventual interests of the royal family, and to provide a proper and natural security against the mismanagement of them in others*.”

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1788.

On the death of Mr. Cornwall being announced, the House adjourned for three days; and, on their re-assembling, Lord Euston proposed, as his successor, Mr. Grenville, and Mr. Welbore Ellis named Sir Gilbert Elliot. On a division, Mr. Grenville was chosen by a large majority†.

1789.
Jan. 3rd.
Mr. Grenville
chosen
Speaker.
5th.

In pursuance of a notice given by Mr. Pitt, that he should submit to the House his notions on the restrictions to be annexed to the office of Regent, it was proposed that the order of the day should be read; when Mr. Loveden, a member of the opposition, observed, that, before the House proceeded to settle the terms of the regency, they ought to know exactly

6th.
New enquiry
into the state
of the King’s
health.

* For a long time this eloquent and masterly letter was generally attributed to Mr. Sheridan, and by some to Sir Gilbert Elliot; but a more recent writer avers, on the authority of Sir Gilbert (Lord Minto), himself, that it “ was originally Burke’s, altered a little, but not improved, by Sheridan and other critics.”

Moore’s Life of Sheridan, vol. ii. p. 50.

† 215 to 144.

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what the exigency of the case really was; what was the present state of his Majesty's health; what the degree of alteration which it had undergone since his physicians were last examined; and whether the probability of his restoration to health was increased or lessened; and he moved that the physicians be called upon to inform the House if the present symptoms could give reason to hope for his Majesty's speedy recovery.

Debate.

Although this motion was not strenuously opposed, the debate upon it was of great length and unusual heat. Reference was made to the examination of one of the physicians before the House of Lords, which, it was contended, was more entitled to attention than those which had been taken before the Commons, being considerably more recent, and given under the sanction of an oath. Among other opinions, one was stated, that the probability of the patient's recovery diminished as the duration of the disorder increased; and an inference was drawn, that as a month had elapsed since the last examination of the medical men, the probability of a favourable event was lessened in proportion. Dr. Warren being cited as the individual from whose testimony this presage was taken, and it being conceived that some disregard to him was expressed, several members spoke very strenuously in vindication of abilities which were universally acknowledged, and of an integrity which had never been impeached.

Mr. Pitt deprecated unnecessary delay, but, in consequence of some observations that had been made, withdrew his motion for the order of the day; and after much discussion, and several attempts at amendments, on one of which a division took place*, it was finally resolved that a committee should be appointed.

A whole week was consumed in this examination, in which some members of the committee seemed to entertain, and laboured to establish, an opinion, that his Majesty would never, or, at least, not till a very

7th to 13th
January.
Examination
of physicians.

* In this division the numbers for the minister were 221 to 141.

distant day, recover the use of his mental faculties; while others considered him, if not already convalescent, rapidly and steadily approaching toward that state. The physicians ranged themselves on one or the other side. Dr. Warren gave the most discouraging, Dr. Willis the most cheering, prognostications.

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On the present unfitness of his Majesty to conduct public affairs all were agreed; and it was generally allowed that his bodily health was improving, and his appetite better, although about his sleep a great difference of opinion existed. On the whole, Dr. Willis expressed sanguine hopes of his Majesty's speedy recovery; but he would not, although much pressed, even intimate what he thought a probable period. Dr. Warren stated that his "expectations of his Majesty's recovery stood upon the same foundation as when he was last examined; the time which had elapsed did not add to his hopes, although it was too short to subtract from them." On a further examination, he reiterated this opinion, adding that the King was worse that day than he had been before, and that his complaint was not at all abated. Dr. Willis, when re-examined on this point, and asked whether, from the circumstances which had fallen within his observation, or come to his knowledge, he, in his conscience, thought the chance of his Majesty's recovery greater or less than it was when he had before been examined, answered, much greater, and that this opinion was derived from his experience in similar instances. He would not venture to say he was sure his Majesty would recover; but he entertained the greatest hopes of that event; and a confidence so strongly founded, that he could scarcely admit a doubt. He was much less, of late than formerly, obliged to employ coercion, and had not used it at all during the last week.

Jan. 7.

12th.

11th.

One of the relaxations in which the royal patient indulged, was reading; and in their examination on this point, Dr. Warren and Dr. Willis differed more widely, both as to matters of fact and opinion, than is generally expected between men of honour and science.

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Dr. Willis asserted that a fortnight before the day on which he was interrogated, the King was used to take up books and could not read a line; but that he would, at the time then present, read several pages, and make good remarks upon the matter; a circumstance from which he derived solid hope of the patient's recovery. On the same day, Dr. Warren deposed, that he had several times, the last time being within a week, been present when the King entertained himself with a book; that his reading never exceeded a line and a half, and his manner was a strong proof of the existence of his malady. Sir George Baker also said, that, from what he had lately observed, he did not conceive that the King was capable of reading a book, for any length of time, with attention and observation. Still Dr. Willis maintained that his Majesty was not only capable of occupying himself with books for a considerable time, and making judicious observations at the moment, but that he would return to the matter after several days, still preserving a correct memory, and continue the same species of observations.

In the course of this investigation, it appeared not only that a great difference of opinion subsisted among the King's physicians, but that personal and party feelings had their share in extending their discord. Dr. Warren was much relied on by the opposition, and Dr. Willis was affirmed to be in correspondence with Mr. Pitt, and particularly in favour and confidence with the Queen. Hence the questions put to him by some members of the Committee displayed the astuteness, and, not unfrequently, some of the roughness of cross-examination in a court of law. Much inquiry was expended on the use of a strong or of a mitigated word in the reports transmitted to Saint James's for the information of the public. Three points were much pressed against Dr. Willis. First, that he had permitted the King to read at all; but having done so, that he had allowed the Tragedy of King Lear, the most improper in the English language, to be put into his hands. Second, that he had suffered the royal patient to use a razor and scissars; and,

third, that he afforded him interviews with the Queen, and some of the young Princesses. To these objections, easy and satisfactory answers were given. When his Majesty was allowed the amusement of reading, he had himself asked for *King Lear*, which Dr. Willis refused, and ordered that a volume of comedies should be supplied. Colman's works were accordingly produced; the King's attendants not knowing, as indeed few persons did know, that the author of the *Jealous Wife* had also made an alteration of *Lear* from Shakspeare and Tate, it happened to be in the book which was brought to the King; but Dr. Willis discovered and removed it; it produced no ill effect, nor did it appear that the royal patient had even opened the volume. When the King began to recover, it was necessary to remove his beard, which had grown to a frightful length, and some portion of his hair. The attendants displaying great awkwardness in the operation, the King, at his earnest desire, was allowed himself to use the necessary implements: no mischief ensued, but Dr. Willis declared afterward, that he shuddered to reflect on what he had done, although, he added that he could not apprehend any harm, having the firmest reliance on the royal sufferer's sentiments of piety, which, even in this dreadful crisis, never altered. Of the third charge, this was the explanation. In taking exercise in the garden, the eyes of his Majesty were often fixed on the window of the apartment allotted to his young children. The physicians yielded to the pathetic appeal of the parent, and granted occasional interviews. At one of these, the King, without any appearance of violence or insane passion, told the Princess Amelia, then in her sixth year, and an object of his peculiar affection, that he would not permit her to quit the room, unless she would promise to return with the Queen. He was required to engage that he would not detain her Majesty more than a quarter of an hour; the interview took place, the time was faithfully observed, and the patient, far from sustaining injury, was benefited by the indulgence*. This exa-

* Examinations of physicians, in the Journals, vol. xlv. p. 47, et seqq.—Parliamentary History, and detached publications.

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mination, which, it was supposed, would occupy only two or three days, lasted a week; and, during its progress, great, but unavailing, efforts were made to excite popular prejudice against the Queen. She was represented as a woman of ambitious and intriguing character, desirous, for the sake of personal advantages, to invade the rights and diminish the honour and dignity of her son. To these calumnies the record of twenty-seven years of a virtuous, unambitious, and unobtrusive life, presented a quiet, but unassailable answer*.

January 13th.
Report of the
committee.Observations
of Mr. Burke.

Mr. Pitt.

When the report was brought up, Mr. Burke opposed its reception, and moved a recommitment. The committee, he said, had bound itself too strictly by the order of the House; Dr. Warren and Dr. Willis had been opposed to each other, and examined as if equal in point of skill; other physicians, who had not been engaged about the royal patient should have been examined; and it appeared to him that his Majesty's life was not safe since he had been placed in such hands. Mr. Pitt observed that the circumstance last alluded to had been stated by Dr. Willis, in consequence of a collateral inquiry, begun by Mr. Burke himself. The report was received, and a day fixed when the House would resolve itself into a committee on the state of the nation. ▶

19th.
Mr. Pitt
moves his
resolutions.

Mr. Powys.

Lord North.

In that committee, the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved five resolutions, as the foundation of the bill to be introduced. It is not necessary here to recapitulate them, as they were in exact conformity with the plan described in his letter to the Prince of Wales. He prefaced his motion with a clear and luminous speech, which led to a fierce and angry debate. Mr. Powys commenced the opposition, by declaring the system of the ministers to be a monstrous fabric, tending to mutilate and dismember the constitutional authority of the Crown. He was supported by Lord North, who, without imitating his vehemence, strongly censured and ably exposed the plan, taking each resolution separately, and stating, in arguments deduced from reason and from history, the objections

* Dutans, p. 90.

which he considered as especially and generally applicable. He was followed by Lord Belgrave, a young member, who introduced into his speech a quotation from Demosthenes. This display incurred the caustic severity of Mr. Sheridan, and for many years supplied a theme to those who can relish a stale joke, or utter a bad one, although they do not understand Greek. The strictures of the honourable member were not confined to Lord Belgrave, but extended to all the propositions. They would create an empire within an empire, and the restrictions were only proposed because the Prince was going to take into his service a different set of men from those who were then in office*. All these observations were answered in a long and able speech by Mr. Grenville, the Speaker, who, while he refuted the arguments of opposition, explained and vindicated the measure itself. Several members were heard; but, on a division, an amendment, which Mr. Powys had moved on the first resolution, was negatived by a large majority†. The second resolution was combated by Mr. Fox alone, and carried, but by a smaller majority‡.

All the other resolutions, except that which related to the King's household, were allowed to pass without resistance. Mr. Pitt, in moving that proposition, observed, that as, by the exigency of the times, Parliament was called upon to provide for the dispatch of public business, and for the discharge of the executive authority, they were also equally bound to the care of his Majesty's person, and the preservation of his dignity. Her Majesty must necessarily be intrusted with the care of the King's person; the officers of the household must be retained, and the only question would be, whether any alteration should be made in the expense attending them. Whatever patronage might be annexed to the powers proposed

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Lord Belgrave.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Grenville.

19th.
Resolutions
respecting the
royal house-
hold debated.
Mr. Pitt

* On this speech, Mr. Drake observed, in the course of the debate, that he was so much agitated by it, that it was with the greatest difficulty he could repress the emotions of his soul, when Mr. Sheridan sat down. Such was the versatility of his oratory, that he could, at will, civilize barbarity and symmetrize deformity.

† 297 to 154.

‡ 216 to 159.

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1789.

to be granted to her Majesty, he wished to ask whether it was likely that in such hands it would be used to enable a faction to obstruct with its weight the government of the Regent? Was it likely, if so given, that it could be made predominant over the accumulated patronage of government?

Lord North
attempts to
divide the
question.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Pitt.

Amendment
moved.

Mr. Grey.

For some time the debate on this resolution was of a desultory character, until Lord North, observing that it consisted of three distinct propositions;—the care of his Majesty's person; the power to remove or continue the household establishment; and the measure of appointing a permanent council;—submitted that it would simplify the discussion to argue those questions separately. Mr. Fox said that, if the minister did not assent to this course it would much embarrass the committee; but Mr. Pitt answered that, as he was decidedly of opinion that her Majesty ought to have the sole care of the King's person, he could not agree to give her that trust without the necessary powers specified in the second part of the resolution; those, therefore, who thought that part of the question objectionable, could move to have the words left out; and Mr. Bouverie moved accordingly.

Mr. Grey vehemently opposed the original resolution. Admitting the propriety of committing to the Queen the care of his Majesty's person, he denied that the patronage of the household, a patronage which did not naturally belong to her, should also be given. What was the tendency of the restrictions on the Regent's power? Were he to forget the duties of a son and of a subject, his love of justice, and his reverence for the constitution, or to sacrifice them all to gratify his ambition, while he possessed the patronage of the army, the navy, and all the great offices of the kingdom, what could oppose him? Surely not the lords with white staves, or the feeble bands of the household. Was a master of the horse, a lord steward, a lord chamberlain, or a groom of the stole, a proper appendage of dignity in his Majesty's present melancholy situation? Was not pageantry rather a mockery and insult to his calamity, than a becoming mark of

respect? He allowed, in the fullest terms, the virtues of the Queen; no one of which was more conspicuous than her moderation in abstaining from all interference with politics: but the amount of the patronage, with which it appeared intended to invest her, was about one-fourth part of the whole civil list; and this she was, no doubt, to manage by advice. On the whole, the resolutions were equally foreign from the principles of the constitution, and repugnant to those of general policy.

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Mr. Dundas considered the proposed limitations as flowing necessarily from the rash and imprudent assertion of the Prince's right,—a declaration which he did not believe to have been inconsiderately or hastily made, but advanced after due deliberation on the course intended to be pursued. He considered the King as in possession of his whole and entire political capacity, and that to a substitute they were to give only those powers which were absolutely necessary. The patronage left to the Regent, comprising the whole army and navy, so far exceeded what was withheld, that his not being able to take a few white wands from those who now carried them, and give them to others, could never impede or embarrass his government. If his Majesty should not soon recover, or should the melancholy conclusion be drawn that his recovery was not to be expected, it would then be time to think either of extending the Regent's powers, or of removing every restriction.

Mr. Dundas.

Lord North considered the resolution to afford a bad precedent, and deprive the Regent of his necessary influence: to him, no less than to the King, ought to belong the power of making peers, and the patronage of the household.

Lord North.

Mr. Fox, in a long and brilliant speech, observed that he had never witnessed a debate like the present, where so much had been said on the one side, and so little on the other. It had been affirmed that the King's personal and political existence were inseparable in the eye of the law; but how that person, whose personal faculties were confessedly suspended

Mr. Fox.

by a severe visitation of Providence, could still exist in the full enjoyment of his political character, was beyond his understanding. The restriction as to the creation of peers and removal of officers of the household, was treated as rather invidious than important; nor could he see any probable evil in passing this regency bill for an indefinite time. Twelve or eighteen months had been alluded to as the probable duration of the King's incapacity; but he might recover in a fortnight. In this dreadful fortnight, the unrestrained Regent might, perhaps, in the full exercise of his authority, dismiss the Lords of the Bed Chamber, and change the white Staves; nay, perhaps he might send a few gentlemen from the Commons up to the House of Peers. What could be the mighty evil of this? At the end of one fortnight, the King re-assumes his power; the bed-chamber lords are reinstated; the staves are replaced; and no evil would then remain but the newly created peers. On the other hand, the power of restoring to the executive government its just prerogatives would be taken away,—never, perhaps, to be resumed. The House of Lords having gained the important point of preventing the Regent from adding to their number, would not be very likely to concede it again; and thus, during the life of the Sovereign, if he should continue indisposed, there would exist no power of resorting to that remedy against cabal and confederacy in the House of Lords. The Chancellor of the Exchequer himself had, in the course of four years, granted forty-two peerages, although, in that time, he had not heard of any confederacy existing in that house against his measures. On the subject of commencing a factious opposition, which Mr. Pitt declared not to be his intention, Mr. Fox said he was so long accustomed to opposition, that he had a kindness for it. He was by no means unwilling to see an opposition strong, watchful, and systematic; because he thought there might be a sincere, as well as a systematic opposition. In going into office, he expected to have the power, patronage, and emoluments of office: the emoluments were of little

value, as the right honourable gentleman well knew, since every minister was obliged to incur expenses fully proportionate. But, if he intended to be honestly useful, he must have the fair means of carrying those intentions into execution. If he had to employ confidential persons in national and necessary services, he must enjoy the means of rewarding them. Mr. Fox then discussed at length the question, what cause of jealousy could exist to justify restrictions? Was it fear of the crooked politics of the Duke of Portland, the interested perfidy of Earl Fitzwilliam, or the corrupt ambition of Lord John Cavendish? Was it not rather opposing men by crippling government. After investigating the probabilities of the King's recovery, and the change that might be necessary if the Prince or the Queen should die, Mr. Fox addressed his inquiries to two points on which no explanation had been given: what was to be the provision of the Regent's household; and whether the restrictions were to have a limited duration, and at what period they were to cease. The civil list would, he said, if not incumbered by a double charge, be sufficient for the Prince's establishment; and he knew it to be the earnest wish of his Royal Highness that no additional burthen should, on his account, be imposed on the people. In conclusion, he expressed his certainty, that, when the public came to view the whole of this scheme, and to compare it with that fourth estate of which they had heard so much when his India bills were before Parliament, they would see, in the present plan, all the mischiefs that were only attributed to the other, and that it was in truth calculated to confer a power inconsistent with the good government of the country.

Without applying himself to all the observations which had been made on the other side, Mr. Pitt began by answering the two questions last propounded. When would the restrictions be taken off the Regent? There was great difficulty and inconvenience in fixing a precise time. If, contrary to his sanguine expectation and belief, the King's malady should be protracted, the restriction as to peerages must be altogether re-

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moved ; that on the household might be revised and new-modelled ; provision might be made respecting the real property of the Crown ; and he should then think it expedient to give the Regent a power to grant patent and other places for life, in the manner always accustomed. It would undoubtedly be necessary to afford the Regent the means of supporting his rank with becoming dignity and splendour. The liberal declaration made by his Royal Highness was intitled to every man's applause ; but, although he was aware of the burthens on the people, nothing should deter him from proposing a new establishment, of suitable dignity, and not from the civil list, for that was the property of his Majesty ; nor did he doubt that the public would with cheerfulness provide for so unavoidable an exigency. He knew not whether he should be left to propose this matter, or whether it might devolve on others ; but whether in or out of office, he should be ready to stand forward and place the expense where, in his mind, it ought to fall—upon the public purse.

Resolutions.

The Committee divided twice ; once on the proposal to separate the resolution into distinct parts, and again on an amendment moved by Lord North ; but on both occasions the minister had a considerable majority*.

Observations
of Mr. Rolle
on Mrs. Fitz-
herbert.

Before the resolutions were reported, Mr. Rolle renewed his inquiries concerning Mrs. Fitzherbert : Sir Francis Bassett treated his conduct as irregular ; Mr. Rolle defended himself, both on general principles, and by allusion to a pamphlet by Mr. Horne Tooke maintaining the validity of the supposed marriage. Lord North replied, that an assertion at the very beginning of that pamphlet was sufficient to discredit it ; for the author, who was a very ingenious gentleman, set out with declaring that the marriage act was no law ; and if assertions of that nature could be believed, we were in a state of nature, and all government at an end.

* 229 to 165, and 220 to 164.

In the Lords, the resolutions were debated with no less zeal and ability than in the lower House; but as the same grounds were taken, little novelty of argument occurred. The resolutions were moved by Earl Camden, President of the Council; the Bishop of Landaff opposed them, in a speech which he afterward published. An amendment, similar to that proposed by Lord North, was moved by the Earl of Sandwich, and, after a very warm debate, in which the Lord Chancellor, Lord Loughborough*, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord Stormont, and Lord Rawdon, greatly distinguished themselves, the amendment was rejected, and the resolutions agreed to, and voted to be returned to the Commons at a conference†. A protest was signed by fifty peers, beside their Royal Highnesses the Dukes of York and Cumberland.

When the message requiring a conference was communicated, Mr. Burke, alluding to reports in circulation that a proceeding of considerable importance was in agitation, required from the Chancellor of the Exchequer an explanation of the next step intended to be taken. This request produced only a short, wrangling conversation, at the end of which the House agreed to the conference. From this debate Mr. Fox was absent; a circumstance which occasioned much animadversion. His friends said he had retired to

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Jan. 22, 23.
Debates in the
House of
Lords on the
resolutions.

Protest.

26.

Conference.

* A passage in this noble and learned lord's speech occasioned much notice, and was deemed injurious to the interests of his party. "Among abundant instances," he said, "of the idle reasoning adopted as argument in defence of placing the patronage of the household in the hands of the Queen, as that the King would feel his mind disturbed when he awakened from his trance, if he saw that his domestic servants had been removed from about his person; he put the case, that his Majesty's incapacity had taken place some years since, and that he had come to himself a few years ago; in that case, his ministers, when admitted to their first audience, would have laid this sort of information before him:—'Your Majesty has lost thirteen colonies, but your palace stands where it did. Millions of national debt have been accumulated, but—your lords with white staves stand where you left them. Much of the best blood of your subjects has been spilt, but—your lords of the bed chamber are still the same. Many calamities have happened in consequence of weakness of government, occasioned by the prevalence of secret influence; but be not concerned at this; your lords of the bed chamber, your gentlemen pensioners, your beef-eaters, are still the same. Look into the Red Book, and you will find it just the same.' " This style would, from any peer, have deserved censure, on the score of bad taste, bad feeling, and coarseness; but, considering the part the noble lord had filled during Lord North's administration, it deservedly met with heavier reprobation.

† 94 to 68.

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Bath for his health; but it was asserted, and not disbelieved, that the state of affairs at Carlton House made him apprehensive of being further pressed by Mr. Rolfe for explanations on the delicate subject formerly alluded to*.

Resolutions
laid before the
Prince of
Wales.

After the conference, Mr. Pitt said he should next propose to lay the resolutions voted by the two Houses before the Prince of Wales, in order to know whether his Royal Highness was willing to accept the regency upon those conditions. Mr. Grey could not understand the meaning of this proceeding, but imputed it to a desire of procrastination. The minister ably and effectually repelled this charge, shewing that all delay hitherto had proceeded from his opponents; and then, after a short speech, moved the resolution for an address.

27th
Difficulties as
as to opening
the session.

In the debate it was said, that, in order to open a regular session of Parliament, and pass the regency bill, a commission must pass under the great seal, enabling persons therein named to deliver a speech and commence it in the usual form. The condition of the House, it was observed, had been altered, even since the passing of their first resolution: they had then a Speaker; now only a Speaker elect,—for the member who then filled the chair had not yet received the approbation of the Crown. The exigency of the case, and the implied assent of the King to every thing which passed under the great seal, was urged; but Mr. Burke reprobated the application of that fiction of law, and said he had never heard of a phantom being raised in a private family, but for the purpose of robbing the house. So far from being a representative of the forms of the constitution, it was a masquerade, a mummer, a piece of buffoonery, used to burlesque it, and to ridicule every form of government. A phantom conjured up to affright propriety and drive it from our isle. An hideous spectre, to which, in the language of Macbeth, it might be said,

Observations
of Mr. Burke.

“Avaunt, and quit my sight! Let the earth hide thee!
“Thy bones are marrowless, thy blood is cold;
“Thou hast no speculation in those eyes
“Which thou dost glare with.”

* Dufens, p. 103.

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And so in fact it was with this political spectre; its bones were marrowless, its blood was cold, and it had no speculation in its eyes. He reprobated it therefore as a chimera, a monster taken out of the depths of hell.

It was said by Mr. Sheridan, that, by appointing a regent, without an annual election, ministers would avoid reducing the constitution to a republic. This was founded, not on any thing which had fallen from ministers, but on an observation by Mr. Fox, that, if they meant to make a republic, he should, in such a case, approve of a limitation of the regency, and an annual election. Mr. Burke said that he should approve of it for the same reason. If they chose to make a republic, why did they not make it in a manly way, and openly declare their intention? If he were asked, did he hate a republican speculation? he would answer, No! But he knew a republic could not be speculated upon according to the principles of our constitution. He loved, he revered, he adored the true principles of a republic; but was that the mode of instituting one? "O, Republic!" he exclaimed, "how art thou libelled! how art thou prostituted, buffooned, and burlesqued! O, Fabric, built after so many ages, and cemented by the blood of patriots, how art thou degraded!" As well might it be said, that the mutilated creatures of the opera-house were the representatives of heroes, the true and perfect Cæsars, Catos, and Brutuses of Rome, as that strange and jumbled chaos the representative of a real republic! Such an attempt to establish a republic as the present was the certain way to have a monster set over them, and introduce a hypocritical sort of government.

Mr. Sheridan.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Burke.

Many observations were made on the hardship imposed on the Prince: Mr. Grey asserted that the minister, by his whole conduct, shewed an entire want of system. The motion passed, nevertheless, without a division; the address was presented; and the answer of his Royal Highness imported, that duty to the King, and other cogent motives, induced him to accede to the proposal of the two Houses, although he felt

Address to the
Prince.

31st.
His answer.

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Address to the
Queen.Debate in the
Lords on open-
ing the session.
Earl Camden
proposes a
commission.

Carried.

The princes of
the blood
withdrawn.Feb. 2.
In the House
Commons.

the difficulties of the situation in which he would be placed. He presumed the restrictions were intended only to be temporary, founded on the loyal hope, in which he ardently participated, that His Majesty's disorder might not be of long duration, and trusting, in the mean while, that he should receive a zealous and united support in the two Houses, and in the nation, proportioned to the difficulty attending the discharge of his trust. A similar address was presented to the Queen, who returned a short but grateful answer.

Immediately after these papers had been read in the upper House, the Lord President, having shewn, in a luminous and argumentative speech, the necessity of opening the Parliament by means of a commission under the great seal, that Parliament alone could frame and direct such a commission, the Prince of Wales having no power to command, nor the Chancellor to affix it of his mere authority, moved that it was expedient and necessary that letters patent for opening the Parliament should pass under the great seal, of the tenor and under a form then mentioned. Among the names of the intended commissioners which were inserted in the motion, were those of their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales, the Dukes of York, Gloucester, and Cumberland, and the most eminent ministers of state*. The Duke of York having declared that, although he had no direct authority from his royal brother to request that his name should be withdrawn, yet, as he had entertained one and the same opinion respecting all the proceedings, and considered the whole system unconstitutional and illegal, he would take upon himself to request that the Prince of Wales's name should be withdrawn. The three Royal Dukes had previously expressed the same desire: they were therefore omitted, and, without other alteration, the commission was voted.

In the House of Commons, a long and animated debate produced little that was new or interesting;

* See the form of the Commission, *Lords' Journals*, vol. xxxviii. p. 344.

the ministers were reproached for delay, for deserting, in some respects, while in others they adhered to, the precedents offered by the revolution: the question of the Prince's right was revived: and Mr. Sheridan, in the absence of Mr. Fox, denied its ever having been asserted by him. Mr. Burke, whose metaphor of a phantom had been the subject of animadversion in the House of Lords, now repeated it in terms still more forcible. The plan proposed, he said, was to adopt what deserved a worse name than a phantom: they were going to create Milton's monster of Sin and Death—death to the constitution, and sin to the feelings of the country. They were going to steal the great seal, to commit a forgery and fraud, and to support violence. The House had no right to authorize the Lord Chancellor to put the great seal to forgery, fraud, and violence; and, giving them the form of the royal authority, instead of the substance, was to regale the House with the sweepings of the cobwebs in Westminster Hall, and the smoke of the dish. The danger which had been talked of, if they were to address the Prince of Wales to take the regency upon him, reminded him of the giant who used to swallow a dozen windmills for breakfast, and was, at last, choked by eating a pound of butter before a hot oven in July*.

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1789.

Mr. Burke.

Earl Bathurst, in pursuance of the powers contained in the commission, opened the session with a speech, merely pointing out the necessity of providing for the care of His Majesty's person and the due administration of his authority, during the present calamity. Some ordinary business was transacted in the House of Commons, and the Parliament was now considered to be in full and regular action

3rd.
Opening of
the session.

When Mr. Pitt presented the regency bill, Mr. Powis enquired whether the power of the commissioners was limited to that,—whether any could give assent to other bills,—or whether the commission had in fact expired? The answer was, that the instrument was still in force, and would authorize

5th.
Regency bill.

* Rabelais, *Histoire de Pantagruel*, liv iv. c. 17.

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LXIV.

1789.
Mr. Grey.

6th,
Mr. Burke.

assent to any other enactment. The bill being read a first time, Mr. Grey objected to the manner in which provision was made, in case of the King's recovery, for his resumption of authority ; but Mr. Pitt shewed that the clause alluded to had been misapprehended.

On the motion for a second reading, Mr. Burke stated his grounds of opposition in a long and elaborate speech, delivered with his accustomed vehemence. He strongly censured the conduct of the ministry, asserting that the House and the country had never before been so ill treated. They had degraded the Royal Family, sown among them the seeds of future distractions and disunions, and their conduct verged on treason ; for which the justice of their country would, he trusted, one day overtake them. He was called to order, and Mr. Pitt animadverted, mildly, on the impropriety of such expressions, the extraordinary style and peculiarly vehement and passionate tone in which they were delivered.

Mr. Burke defended his warmth, as arising from public feeling, when he saw that, under the pretence of a government, provision was made for tumult, disorder, and debility. He then proceeded to animadvert on the different provisions of the bill ; noticing, first, the retention of the King's privy purse from the Regent : this revenue had progressively increased from forty-eight to sixty thousand pounds a year ; which, he said, would form a fund from which the Queen might bribe members of Parliament. The Prince of Wales was excluded from the care of the King's person, and that might be proper ; but could the same rules be applied to the Dukes of York, Gloucester, and Cumberland ? It was as if the whole House of Brunswick was outlawed, excommunicated, and attainted of high treason. A clause, most extraordinary and objectionable, was that which gave to the Queen's council the power of pronouncing His Majesty recovered, and restoring him to his government ; it subjected the King's restoration to artful contrivances. Eminent physicians had been examined before his insanity was declared in Parliament, and a like course ought to be pursued before his recovery was admitted.

No debate followed this harangue; the bill was read a second time, and ordered to be committed. The various clauses were strenuously argued during four days. Mr. Fox did not appear, Mr. Sheridan spoke seldom, and not in a forcible manner; Lord North frequently led the opposition, but Mr. Burke took the most conspicuous place. To recapitulate, or even enumerate, the objections and answers, would be now a useless employment of time, an unproductive tax on patience. Two remarkable incidents occurred. A clause in the bill declared, that, if the Regent married a person professing the Roman Catholic religion, his authority should cease. Mr. Rolle proposed an amendment, extending the terms of exclusion to the actual celebration of a marriage ceremony, whether legal or not. Lord Belgrave opposed this motion as unnecessary, after the distinct denial of the fact which had been made in the House. Mr. Pitt concurred in the objection, alleging that the House could not investigate rumours and unauthenticated reports. Some altercation took place on an imputation of malignant motives to Mr. Rolle; but his motion was unanimously negatived.

On another day, Mr. Burke addressed these observations to the chair. It had been asked, he said, would they strip the King of every mark of royalty, and transfer all the dignities of the crown to another person? No, heaven forbid, when the person wearing the crown could lend a grace to those dignities, and derive a lustre from the splendour of his household. But, did they recollect that they were talking of a sick King, of a monarch smitten by the hand of Omnipotence, and that the Almighty had hurled him from his throne, and plunged him into a condition which drew down upon him the pity of the meanest peasant in his kingdom. Mr. Burke was called to order. The Marquis of Graham said, that neither the right honourable gentleman, nor any other man in that House, should dare to say that the King was hurled from his throne; and there was a general cry of "Take down his words!" Mr. Burke declared that he had been

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1789.
Bill in the
committee,
7th—9th—
10th—11th.

7th.

9th.
Mr. Burke.

Called to or-
der.

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1789.

12th.

Third reading.

Amendment as
to peers.

13th.

18th.

Bill in the

House of

Lords.

The King's
convalescence
announced.

Committee
adjourned.

interrupted in the midst of a sentence, and that Scripture itself, so maimed and mangled, might be rendered blasphemy.

On the motion for a third reading, several amendments were proposed. Mr. Pulteney, observing the great inconvenience that must arise from a House of Lords fixed and unalterable, moved that the restriction on new creations should be limited to three years; and the amendment was adopted. Less fortunate was another attempt by Mr. William Smith to obtain a clause favourable to the dissenters, and one by Mr. Sheridan for restraining the royal assent to bills by commission.

Opposed in every stage, the bill was read a second time in the Lords, and had made considerable progress in the committee, when the Lord Chancellor informed the House that his Majesty's physicians had pronounced him to be in a state of convalescence; and, since that, the account of his progressive improvement had increased from day to day, and the intelligence from Kew that morning was so favourable, that he conceived every noble lord would agree with him in acknowledging that it would be indecent and improper to proceed further, when the cause of the bill might probably be entirely removed. The Duke of York, in animated terms, expressed his joy at the intelligence, and believed, although he had no direct communication with him, that his royal brother would feel equal, if not greater pleasure than himself.

The committee was adjourned for a few days*.

* From the Posthumous Memoirs of Sir Nathaniel William Wraxall, who has detailed with great minuteness all the circumstances of the King's illness, and the proceedings in Parliament, of which he was a member, I have principally derived the facts relating to Lord Thurlow, and to Mr. Fox's state of health. See Wraxall's Posthumous Memoirs, vol. iii. p. 175 to the end.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-FIFTH.

1789.

Proceedings in Ireland.—Death of the Duke of Rutland—succeeded as Lord Lieutenant by the Marquis of Buckingham.—Exertion of parties—opening of the session of Parliament.—Debate on the Address.—Mr. Parsons — Mr. Grattan—Mr. Brown—the Attorney-general.—Mr. Grattan attacks the Lord Lieutenant.—Amendment of the Address—Mr. Curran—carried.—Committee voted—supplies postponed.—State of Government—objections to forming a Committee.—Mr. Parsons.—Intentions of Government as to Regency—reprobated by Mr. G. Ponsonby—plan proposed by Mr. Grattan—resolutions moved.—Resolution for an address to the Prince of Wales—debated—Attorney-general.—Violence of the mob.—Proceedings in England communicated.—Address voted—sent to the Lords—carried to the Lord Lieutenant—who refuses to transmit it.—Mr. Grattan's motion — delegates appointed. — Debate. — Mr. Brown.—Motions by Mr. Grattan.—The King's recovery. British Parliament opened by a speech in the King's name. —Address moved in the Lords—observations of Lord Stanhope.—In the Commons—Mr. Fox.—Estimates.—Navy—army, ordnance.—Extraordinary supplies—new taxes.—Mr. Sheridan's motion for a committee on the revenue.—Mr. Pitt moves resolutions for excise on tobacco — strenuous Opposition —Mr. Beaufoy Mr. Fox — Mr. Grenville and Mr. Dundas—bill passed.—Exertions respecting the slave-trade.—Petitions to Parliament—report from the Privy Council.—Speech of Mr. Wilberforce—Mr. Burke — Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox.—Further debate—Alderman Sawbridge —decision postponed.—Sir W. Dolben's bill renewed — state of the dispute. — Mr. Beaufoy's motion on corporation

acts—negatived.—Lord Stanhope's motion on general freedom in religion—bill rejected—a second threatened—produced and rejected—observations of Lord Abingdon.—Bill for commemorating the Revolution—passes the Commons—lost in the Lords.—Mr. Grenville Secretary of State.—Mr. Addington chosen Speaker.—Prorogation—observations on the Session.—The King.—Procession to St. Paul's.—The Prince of Wales.—Duel between the Duke of York and Colonel Lenox.—Reception of the delegates from Ireland.—The ministry—the opposition.—Lord Thurlow.—Supposed influence of ladies at Carlton House.—Mr. Sheridan—General state of the country.

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LXV.

1789.
Proceedings in
Ireland.
The Duke of
Rutland dies.
Succeeded as
Lord Lieu-
tenant by the
Marquis of
Buckingham.
Exertions of
parties.

In the Parliament of Ireland the question of the Regency occasioned no less discussion than in that of Great Britain. In consequence of the decease of the Duke of Rutland*, the Marquis of Buckingham had been appointed Lord Lieutenant; but the popularity of his predecessor did not devolve on him; his chief secretary was Aleyne Fitzherbert, Esq. afterward Lord St. Helens. Such, it is asserted, was the prevailing discontent, that on the first intelligence of the King's malady, the flattering expectation was formed of a speedy end to the administration, which was considered systematically inimical to the welfare of the country. If a change of ministers took place, a dissolution of Parliament was expected; and a political test was prepared, to be tendered to all candidates as the condition on which they were to be supported; and many bound themselves by oaths not to vote for any one who would not conform.

On the other hand, every effort was made to procure from Ireland a formal recognition of the Regent whom England should appoint, with all restrictions and limitations which might be imposed by the British Parliament†.

* October 1787. In the Memoirs of Dr. Watson, Bishop of Landaff, is a laudatory speech, which the reverend Prelate delivered, on the decease of the Duke, in the House of Lords.

† Plowden's Historical Review of the State of Ireland, vol. ii. p. 228.

In opening the session, the Lord Lieutenant briefly informed the two Houses of his Majesty's indisposition, and promised a communication of all documents already received, or afterward to be transmitted.

When the report of the address was brought up, Mr. Parsons expressed a doubt of the Lord Lieutenant's power to meet them; it was not given by his commission, nor by the law of the land; they were a convention, not a Parliament. These observations were neither answered nor supported; but Mr. Grattan occasioned a debate of some length, and much heat, by a vituperative attack on the character and conduct of the Lord Lieutenant, who resisted less firmly, from a general expectation that his authority was not expected to be of long duration*.

Mr. Grattan admitted that the Report of the examination of his Majesty's physicians was evidence sufficient to satisfy the House; but were they to wait for his Excellency's report of these transactions, it would appear as if their measures must be governed by those of another assembly. "Ireland," he said, "waits not for a lesson from Britain, nor for a model "whereby to frame her proceedings:" and he therefore objected to the paragraph in the address which thanked the Lord Lieutenant for the promise of further communication. These opinions were supported by Mr. Griffiths and Mr. Brown†; who said, he came into the House, extremely well disposed to *dilacerate* the public character of the Viceroy; but it was now left in a condition so miserable and mangled, that it would be ungenerous and unmanly to attack the small fragment that remained. Notwithstanding this preamble, the residue of his speech consisted of nothing but a severe *dilaceration* of the Lord Lieutenant's conduct and character. The Attorney-general made a short answer, framed on the supposition of what the last speaker might have said, but for his determined forbearance; he denied that, by any twist of imagination, the paragraph could appear to be con-

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1789.

Feb. 5.
Opening of the
session.

Debate on the
Address.
Mr. Parsons.

Mr. Grattan.

Mr. Brown.

The Attorney-
general.

* Plowden, vol. ii. p. 230.

† Styled of the College.

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1789.

Mr. Grattan
attacks the
Lord Lieu-
tenant.Committee
voted.Supplies
postponed.
7th.State of
government.11th.
Objections to
forming a
committee.

Mr. Parsons.

trived for the purpose of delay; and the address passed unanimously.

Against the paragraph, which expressed approbation of the Viceroy's general conduct, Mr. Grattan vehemently protested. He condemned his expenses, accompanied as they were with professions of economy and censures on his predecessor, the Duke of Rutland, whose pensions he nevertheless continued; while others were improperly and improvidently granted; and he censured the extravagance of the Park establishment*. After hearing Mr. Curran, and several other members, an amendment was agreed to, giving his Excellency credit for wishing and being anxious to promote the welfare and prosperity of the country.

A resolution, moved by the Secretary of State, that the House should resolve itself into a committee on the sixteenth, was amended on the motion of Mr. Grattan, substituting the eleventh†; and when the Chancellor of the Exchequer moved the supplies, Mr. Grattan carried an amendment, postponing the consideration until the day appointed for the committee.

The majority on these occasions alarmed and paralyzed the government. Hopes of immediate accession to power animated the opposition, while the Court could only obstruct their triumph by such delays as could be gained without exposing themselves to the mortifying results of further divisions.

On the appointed day, before the Speaker left the chair, objections were made against the precipitation which was desired on a subject so delicate and important. If a triumphant majority, Mr. Parsons said, would shake the crown, and cast away the sceptre of Ireland, he could only lament their folly, and despise their temerity; they would not deserve even the degraded name of followers of a faction, but must be considered as conspirators against the constitution. On the arguments in favour of delay being pressed, the opposition required to know how it was intended to supply the defect in the executive government; and Mr. Fitzherbert, having answered that it was intended to

* The Lord Lieutenant's household.

† 128 to 74.

confer on his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, in the most respectful manner, the powers of the third estate, with all necessary rights and prerogatives, Mr. George Ponsonby said, he was certain that the plan of the government, in every step they had taken, was only to follow implicitly the conduct of another parliament in another country; he would therefore oppose that and the mode of proceeding by bill altogether, as utterly unconstitutional.

The committee being formed, Mr. Grattan said, the course which he and his friends meant to pursue was to move an address to the Prince of Wales, inviting him to accept, during the King's illness, the government of Ireland as regent. But, he observed, as the addresses of Parliament, although competent, in a case like the present, to create an efficient third estate, could not confer the form of a law and the stamp of legislation, it would be advisable, after the regency had been accepted, to pass a bill reciting the circumstances, and declaring and enacting that the Prince of Wales was and should be Regent of Ireland, during his Majesty's indisposition, and conferring on him the personal exercise of the regal authority. The reason for this plenitude of power was to be found in the nature of the prerogative, which was given, not for the sake of the King, but of the people, for whose use kings and regents, and prerogatives, were conceived. There was no political reason why these prerogatives should be destroyed, nor any personal reason why they should be suspended.

The first resolution, which merely asserted the interruption in the exercise of royal authority by the King's indisposition, passed without much observation. The second was, that an address be presented to the Prince of Wales, humbly requesting him to take upon himself the government of this realm, during his Majesty's indisposition, under the style and title of Prince Regent of Ireland, exercising and administering, in his Majesty's name, all regal powers, jurisdiction, and prerogatives.

This resolution, so entirely repugnant to the pro-

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1789.

Intentions of government as to a regency. Reprobated by Mr. Ponsonby.

Plan proposed by Mr. Grattan.

Resolutions moved.

Resolution for an address to the Prince of Wales.

Debated.

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Attorney-general.

It passes.

Violence of
the mob.12th.
Proceedings in
England
communicatedAddress to the
Prince voted.16th.
Sent to the
Lords.
Altered.

ceedings of the British Parliament, occasioned a long and violent debate, in which, not only Mr. Grattan, Mr. Curran, and the former opponents of government took a conspicuous part, but many of the usual supporters of ministry, and even the Secretary of State, declared vehemently in its favour. The Attorney-general made a generous and vigorous stand on the other side, but with an unaffected renunciation of all hopes of success. Still he manfully maintained that the measures proposed were contrary to the common and statute law of the realm, and criminal in the extreme.

In the feeling that resistance was hopeless, the friends of government participated so heartily, that, at two o'clock in the morning, the resolution passed without a division. Much personal animosity against the Lord Lieutenant was expressed; and, in the course of the debate, the Speaker was obliged to resume the chair, and direct the Serjeant-at-arms to seize the persons composing an armed mob, who were assailing the doors of the House. At the sight of a competent force, endued with authority, the rioters fled, and the Speaker observed, that, although he was informed that some of them wore gowns, he hoped they did not belong to the University.

At their next meeting, the Lord Lieutenant transmitted to the House the resolutions of the Lords and Commons of England, with the answers of the Prince of Wales. These papers were, after some objections, allowed to be read, and ordered to lie on the table. An address to the Prince, in conformity with the resolution of the preceding night, was then presented, agreed to without a division, and forwarded to the lords.

As that House had adjourned until Monday, a delay of four days took place; a further adjournment was resisted with success, and, with some amendment, the address of the lower House was carried by a majority of nineteen*, the minority entering strong protests on the Journals†. When the paper, thus altered, was

* 45 to 23.

† See Plowden, vol. ii, p. 247. Seward's Collectanea, vol. ii. p. 178, 272, 273.

returned, some members required a conference; but this measure was not carried. Both Houses then waited on the Lord Lieutenant, requesting that he would transmit the address to his Royal Highness; but he answered, "Under the impressions which I feel of my official duty, and of the oath which I have taken as chief governor of Ireland, I am obliged to decline transmitting this address into Great Britain. For I cannot consider myself warranted to lay before the Prince of Wales an address, purporting to invest his Royal Highness with powers to take upon him the government of this realm, before he shall be, by law, enabled so to do."

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Carried to
the Lord
Lieutenant.

He refuses to
transmit it.

A refusal so firm and uncompromising at first disconcerted the movers of the address; they adjourned the House; and, on the following day, Mr. Grattan proposed a resolution, which was readily adopted, that his Excellency having declined transmitting the address, a competent number of members be appointed to present it. The Lords having, by message, announced a similar determination, and that the Duke of Leinster and the Earl of Charlemont were selected as their delegates, the Commons appointed Mr. Conolly, Mr. O'Neill, Mr. William Brabazon Ponsonby, and Mr. James Stewart, as coadjutors of the two nobleman. This measure was not carried without a vehement debate, in the course of which the conduct of the English Parliament was unsparingly scrutinized, and that of the Lord Lieutenant strongly censured. The intelligence from England was supposed to have given some courage to the friends of government, which induced Mr. Curran to congratulate them on having recovered their voices; they had shewn a most sympathetic feeling for the infirmity of their beloved Sovereign. When the people despaired of his recovery, they were dumb; drowned in sorrow; they could find no utterance; but now, that hopes were held out to them, their oratory was restored; it did not yet venture on its legs—it was confined to "hear him." The question had been deserted; the House was not inquiring whether an address was ex-

Mr. Grattan's
motion.

20th.

Delegates
appointed.

Debate.

Mr. Curran.

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pedient or legal; that had already been decided. They were now called upon to vindicate their own honour. The Marquis of Buckingham had insulted—they were bound to answer the insult. Not satisfied with refusing to transmit their address, he had insulted them by a lecture, equally unseasonable and ill-founded. If the King denies his assent, he does it in the modest language of doubt, “ he will advise ;” but the pride of mock majesty, of burlesque royalty, must shew its plumes, its glory, its learning. He had added outrage to his refusal. From such a character it would not be worth their while to resent this misconduct; but the insult was upon record, and would remain a stigma upon them, when the memory of the noble Lord would not live to be their justification.

Motion by
Mr. Grattan

25th.

In fact, the labour of debate was left almost entirely to the powerful energies of the Attorney-general; but his party ventured on three unsuccessful divisions on a resolution proposed by Mr. Grattan*, approving the conduct of the two Houses, and strongly censuring that of the Viceroy. And the opponents of government followed up their success by voting supplies for paying the interest of the national debt, and for maintenance of the army for two months only, ending on the twenty-fifth of May. This measure was the occasion of two divisions, in which, although the opposition party was still victorious, the proportion of its majorities was very much diminished†.

The King's
recovery.

Feb. 24th.
March 2nd—
5th.

Before these angry debates and strong resolutions had passed and been carried into effect, the cause of them had ceased; the burthen of affliction was removed from the suffering Sovereign, and the nation was cheered by the tidings, first, of his convalescence, and afterward of his complete recovery. Twice after his first announcement of his Majesty's improved state of health, had the Lord Chancellor moved for adjournments, so as to prevent the proceeding of the committee on the regency bill, when, at last, he concluded

* They were, 130 to 74—119 to 78—and 115 to 83.

† 105 to 85, and 102 to 77.

the subject altogether, by informing the House that his Majesty found his health so much established, that he was in hopes of communicating with him on the following Tuesday, on public business.

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On that day, the King's health being perfectly recovered, although it was not deemed proper that he should as yet personally attend, commissioners were appointed to open the session, by delivering a speech in his name. In the Lords, the Earl of Chesterfield proposed and Lord Cathcart seconded the motion for a loyal and affectionate address. Lord Stanhope deprecated rashness and precipitation; the King's incapacity to exercise the functions of government had been declared upon mature examination; in a bill before the House, a clause was contained, specifying the manner in which the King's ability to resume the reins of government should be declared; and he wished the address to be deferred only so long as would afford time to rescind the resolution already on the Journals. These observations were easily and satisfactorily answered by the Lord Chancellor, and the address was unanimously voted.

10th.
British Parlia-
ment opened
by a speech in
the King's
name.

Address
moved in the
Lords.

Observations
by Lord
Stanhope.

Earl Gower made a similar motion in the lower House, and was seconded by Mr. Yorke. The speech of the mover was highly complimented by Mr. Fox; but he treated that of Mr. Yorke as reflecting on himself and his party. Considering the present like all other King's speeches, to be those of his minister, he saw no reason why he should not take the advantage of such a vehicle, and applaud his own measures a second, or even a third, time; but, on the other hand, he must tell the seconder of the motion it was not only unparliamentary and unconstitutional, but highly disloyal, to assert that those who differ in opinion from ministers, and oppose their measures, might not be as sincerely attached to the Sovereign as any other description of his subjects. He did not wish that any thing should prevent the House from coming to an unanimous vote, and moved no amendment.

In the
Commons.

Mr. Fox.

When the session was thus regularly commenced, the business flowed without interruption, and without

Estimates.

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1789.
March 17th.
Navy.

Army.

18—19.
Ordnance.

Extraordinary
supplies.

June 10th.
New taxes.

much novelty or interest, in its accustomed channel. The navy estimates were voted with little discussion. Those of the army produced a speech of some length from General Burgoyne, who reprobated the use of unconstitutional influence in removing officers for political causes; and alluded to the Marquis of Lothian, who had been displaced, as the General affirmed, in consequence of the late discussions on the regency; and he compared his case to those of General Conway and Colonel Acourt. The Secretary at War and Colonel Phipps maintained that the promotion or removal of officers was purely the prerogative of the Crown, and the exercise of it, even if directed by mere caprice, was not to be a subject of inquiry in that House. The ordnance estimates were larger than usual; but this was occasioned by a plan for establishing fortifications in the West India Islands. In favour of the project, it was alleged, that even if we had a superior fleet in those seas, the enemy might, during its absence, attempt a landing, but would be prevented from conquering the island, if the forts could hold out even for a short period. On the other side, it was insisted, that if a landing were effected, the threat of laying waste the plantations by fire would compel any commanding officer to capitulate*, while a similar threat from our forces when the fleet returned would be treated with derision by the enemy. The estimates were voted without a division.

Extraordinary supplies for the service of the current year were required, to the amount of five million seven hundred thousand pounds. The Chancellor of the Exchequer, having stated the cause of such a demand, disclosed the means by which the interest was to be defrayed. Part of his plan was a tontine, or grant of annuities for time, with benefit of survivorships. He proposed taxes on newspapers and advertisements; cards and dice; probates and legacies; and on horses and carriages. All these imposts being

* Such were the means by which Brimstone Hill, an impregnable fortress in St. Christopher's, had been compelled to surrender to the French in the last war.

already established in principle and practice, the increase afforded but few topics of animadversion. There was some debate on the newspaper tax. The vendors of these publications presented a petition, which, consistently with established forms, the House could not receive. A short debate took place in the committee; but the objections were feeble, and the measure was carried on a division*.

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July 1st.

In addition to some general observations made when the minister moved for a supply, Mr. Sheridan presented to the House a series of calculations and statements, forming the foundation of a motion for a committee to inquire into the state of the public income and expenditure, the progress actually made in the reduction of the national debt, and into the grounds on which a further reduction might be expected. This proposition was ably supported by Mr. Fox; but his arguments, and those of the mover, were answered by Mr. Grenville and Mr. Pitt, and the motion negatived without a division.

10th.
Mr. Sheridan's
motion for a
committee on
the revenue.

Mr. Fox.

One measure connected with finance occasioned much debate, and was the subject of considerable public discussion. Mr. Pitt moved resolutions that the existing duties should be repealed, and that, in future, tobacco should be under the controul of the excise, instead of the customs. As a reason for the change, he stated that, since the late regulation had deprived them of tea, wines, and spirits, tobacco was become the staple of illicit traders. At least one half of our whole consumption was smuggled; the merchants of Glasgow, who were intelligent men, and conversant on the subject, were of opinion that not less than twelve millions of pounds were annually imported; and the traders in London estimated it at fourteen millions. The actual legal importation had been on the average seven millions; so that, by the illicit introduction of the residue, fraud was committed on the revenue to the annual amount of nearly three hundred and fifty thousand pounds.

Tobacco sub-
jected to the
excise.

June 16th.
Mr. Pitt moves
resolutions for
excise on
tobacco.

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Strenuous
opposition.

24th.

Considering the facility with which the regulation on wine had passed, the ferment which was excited by the present measure might reasonably create surprise. The press teemed with censures; the walls were covered with printed denunciations; public bodies expressed disapprobation and alarm at the extension of excise jurisdiction; and a common hall of the City of London recorded similar sentiments. Thus instructed and impelled, five aldermen*, reinforced by Mr. Sheridan, opposed the motion for going into a committee; but, after a very few words from the Chancellor of the Exchequer, it was carried without a division.

July 15th.

Mr. Beaufoy.

In the committee the bill underwent many alterations and amendments, and the report occasioned a long debate. It was first proposed to add a clause, declaring that persons aggrieved by a determination of commissioners of excise, or justices of the peace, might bring an action of trespass, in which the condemnation or conviction should not protect the defendant. Mr. Beaufoy, in support of this amendment, balanced the benefits of the trial by jury in excise cases, against its inconveniences; and, while he agreed that it would not be right to extend it to those dealers who had long before been subject to the opposite system, still maintained that the vendors of tobacco, now for the first time to be placed under the proposed regulation, might justly claim an exception in their favour. These arguments received but little answer; the House disposed of them by rejecting the clause on a division†.

Mr. Fox.

Another effort was made, by proposing some amendments utterly destructive of the effect of the bill; on which Mr. Fox vindicated the opposition, although he admitted that he had not diligently attended its progress, considering all resistance hopeless. He deprecated the effect of reasonings drawn from precedents, or from success, which afforded no argument, as they could form no justification of a system in itself uncon-

* Sawbridge, Sir Watkin Lewes, Newnham, Sir Benjamin Hammet, and

† 60 to 16.

stitutional. The extension of the excise laws manifested a forgetfulness of those blessings which it was so much our habit to boast of as an enjoyment beyond the reach of other nations. It seemed as if liberty and a free constitution were merely talked of and not felt; as if they were words only fit to decorate a speech in Parliament—a beautiful theory, but no longer compatible with practice; when this country ceased to be free, the people would cease to be industrious, and, consequently, to be wealthy; and then would the nation cease to be powerful. He reviewed the measure proposed by Sir Robert Walpole, who, all circumstances considered, and allowing for the foibles to which all mankind were liable, had, in his opinion, been a wise minister for this country. In his time, the debt had increased to a size alarming to the politicians of that day. The general language was, that the minister ought to resort to means of increasing the revenue. Sir Robert had listened to the advice of those about him, and had proposed an excise scheme; but relinquishing it was a proof of his wisdom. During Lord Bute's administration, an attempt was made to carry an excise on cyder; but it was clamorously and successfully resisted*. That measure was said to bring the excise into a private gentleman's house, whereas an excise on a particular trade was very different; but he saw no force in the distinction. The shop of the trader was as much his castle as the dwelling of the private gentleman. And he vehemently deprecated any addition to those who were already deprived of a trial by jury. The bill, he added, seemed little to interest the public in general; and if Parliament would not attend their duty, he saw no prospect of stemming the tide; but standing, as we did, the first country for literature, for science, and for all which could improve and adorn mankind, that the source of those enjoyments should be so forgotten, must mortify every man who admired the freedom of our constitution, and the equality of our laws.

* See vol. i. c. 6

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Mr. Grenville
and
Mr. Dundas.

17th.

Bill passed.

Exertions re-
specting the
Slave-trade.

In the absence of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Mr. Grenville and Mr. Dundas supported the bill, treating it as a measure of evident usefulness and necessity, and the apprehensions expressed for the extinction of liberty and the oppression of the subject, as vain and nugatory. The majority in favour of the ministry was like that on the former division*. After two more ineffectual debates, the bill passed.

During the recess of Parliament, and even during the late interesting and agitating discussions, the abolition of the slave trade was not forgotten, but pressed with unremitting zeal and eagerness. The Lords of the Council pursued their examination of circumstances and witnesses, and were abundantly supplied with information by the associated committee. These gentlemen spared no exertion; they wrote, they published, they added to their body all the popular and influential persons they could collect, particularly those who possessed the talent of writing and oratory, and formed committees in all places where it could be effected; they established correspondences with active and useful individuals, and opened communications with ambassadors and ministers of state; they travelled into many countries, and even meditated voyages to Africa and the West Indies, but were deterred by apprehensions of personal danger. Thus they continued augmenting their stores of fact and materials of argument, while the state of affairs on the Continent, and the increasing popularity of the cause at home, favoured their views and flattered their hopes. Yet, among many who were not well affected to the trade, apathy and indolence often prevailed, and persons who would readily impart information, could not be brought to an examination before the Privy Council.

On the other side, the contest was less vigorously sustained, and not so skilfully managed. Mere assertions of facts, and demonstrations of immediate commercial loss and future political injury were lightly regarded. The loss was considered to affect those only who had no

* 62 to 141.

right to complain, while the political mischief was treated as a mere speculation; and both were as firmly denied as they were confidently advanced. Between the disputants there was this manifest difference. The opponents of the trade, beside exercising the vigour, enjoyed the popularity which attends an attack; they attempted an innovation, and all who love such attempts, without considering the justice of the cause or the peril of the consequence, were on their side; they advanced principles of humanity, morality, and religion, and gained, without difficulty, a powerful host of individuals, who, in promoting those great causes, can listen to no arguments of inconvenience, injustice, or wrong.

They crowned these efforts by the publication of votes, sermons, narratives, pamphlets, paragraphs, and pictures, all calculated to bias the judgment of men by strong appeals to their feelings and their imaginations. The other party had the disadvantageous task of supporting, by calculations, arguments avowedly advanced to favour their own interest; they had no alluring statements to make; no appeals to feeling; no short propositions which, when received into the mind, immediately engender the dangerous conceit, that the person imbued with them is infallibly in the right, and that all attempts to prove the contrary are little less than insults to the understanding.

In addition to the petitions of last session, the titles of which were read in the House of Commons, to make them part of the proceedings of the present, many new ones were presented on one side from towns, trades, religious bodies and grand juries, and a still more numerous collection on the other, from ship owners, manufacturers, proprietors and mortgagees of estates, and from many other classes interested in the question. Several of these petitions were transmitted from Bristol and Liverpool, the commerce of which towns was materially affected. At length, Mr. Pitt brought up a voluminous report from the committee of the Privy Council, with an ample detail of evidence, and a day was fixed for discussing the great question.

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Petitions to
Parliament.

March 23rd.

Report from
the Privy
Council.

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Speech of
Mr. Wilber-
force.

Mr. Wilberforce, who had now recovered his health, appeared in this, as in every subsequent stage of the business, the great, firm, and indefatigable leader of the cause. The House having resolved itself into a committee, and taken the reports and evidence of the last session, and of the Privy Council as referred to them; Mr. Wilberforce opened the debate with a long, luminous, and eloquent speech*. He began by apologizing for his deficiencies; he appeared before them the advocate, not of this country, nor of Europe alone, but of the whole world and of posterity. The encouragement he had received, and the increasing conviction of his own mind, during the course of his labours, dispelled his fears, and cheered him with the expectation that, however adverse any might be at present, all, in the end, would be of one mind. The facts stated in the report shewed the slave trade to be, in practice, exactly such as from theory was apprehended. "In a continent just emerging from barbarism, if men were converted into goods and made the objects of traffic, the human race must become subject to ravage like inanimate commodities. This fact would account for all the practices of Africa. Her princes were never impelled to war by public principle, by national glory, and still less by the love of their people; they engaged for the means of gratifying their avarice and sensuality, and we depend on those vices for the very maintenance of a commerce calculated to spread disunion among the African princes, to sow the seeds of every mischief, to inspire enmity, and to destroy humanity."

He next treated on the miseries and horrors of the middle passage, depicting in strong colours the facts proved, and refuting the testimony given on the other side; he inferred from the evidence that, in truth, the West Indies had nothing to fear from an immediate abolition, and undertook to shew that the interests of the planter would be advanced by the measure. On the treatment of the slaves, he observed, that although

* For the preceding facts I have consulted Clarkson, vol. i. p. 561, to the end, and vol. ii. c. 1. Also a great number of pamphlets by both parties.

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proprietors of estates might send out orders perfectly just and humane, and although managers were not to be charged with any native cruelty,—habit, and the absence of sympathy with those whom they must deem an inferior set of beings, would generate it. The decrease of the slave population by death, he ascribed, first to the disparity of number in the sexes, which, after the abolition, nature would cure; next to diseases contracted during the passage, and the astringent, narcotic, and mercurial preparations employed in making them up for the market; thirdly, to excessive labour and improper diet; and fourthly, the dreadful dissoluteness of their manners, principally arising from the absence of the matrimonial tie.

Having detailed and expatiated, at great length, on these points, Mr. Wilberforce treated on the manner in which the African trade affected our marine, affirming that, instead of the nursery, it was the grave of seamen. He proved this point by reference to the muster-rolls of vessels, and by narratives of miseries undergone by British seamen, whom the Africans had seized in retaliation for the carrying off some of their relatives, who had been deposited with slave dealers as pawns. That these grievances were not the subject of public complaint or judicial inquiry, he accounted for by the disinclination of men to press fruitless complaints, and the extreme uncertainty of legal proceedings.

“There is one other argument,” he proceeded, “in my opinion, a very weak and absurd one, which many, however, have much dwelt upon,—I mean, that if we relinquish the slave trade, France will take it up. If the slave trade be such as I have described, if it be in truth both wicked and impolitic, we cannot wish a greater mischief to France than that she should adopt it. For the sake of France, however, and for the sake of humanity, I trust, nay, I am sure, she will not. France is too enlightened to push a scandalous and ruinous traffic, at the very time when England sees her folly, and resolves to renounce it. M. Necker, a man enlightened, moral, and religious, had recorded, when minister, his ab-

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“horrence of the slave trade; and the King of France
“had refused to dissolve a society formed for the abo-
“lition, because he was glad it existed.”

He implored the House speedily and effectually to repair the evils inflicted on Africa. We had brutalized them by a trade which had enslaved their minds, blackened their character, and sunk them so low in the scale of animal beings, that some considered the very apes to be of a higher class, and that the ouran-outang had surpassed them. “Let us,” he said, “make such amends as we can for the mischiefs we have done to that unhappy continent: let us recollect what Europe itself was, no longer than three or four centuries ago. What if I should be able to shew to this House that, in a civilized part of Europe, in the time of our Henry the Seventh, there were people who actually sold their own children? What if I should tell them that England itself was that country? What if I should point out to them that the very place where this inhuman traffic was carried on was the city of Bristol*? Ireland, at the same time, used to drive a considerable trade in slaves with these neighbouring barbarians; but a great plague having infested the country, the Irish, struck with a panic, suspected (I am sure very properly) that the plague was a punishment sent from Heaven for the sin of the slave trade, and therefore abolished it. All I ask, therefore, of the people of Bristol is, that they would become as civilized now, as Irishmen were four hundred years ago.”

Rejecting all notions of palliation and regulation, he insisted on an immediate abolition as the only measure which would adapt itself to justice and true policy. The question could not now be evaded or overlooked; the matter was brought directly before the House, and they must justify to all the world, and to their own conscience, the grounds and principles of

* I doubt the accuracy of the report as to this intire passage; I can find no trace of such a traffic in Bristol since the eleventh century, when it was abolished by William the Conqueror, at the intercession of Archbishop Lanfranc; nor, except as a figure of rhetoric, could the people of Bristol, in the days of Henry the Seventh, be termed barbarians.

their decision. "A society," he added, "has been established for the abolition of this trade, in which Dissenters, Quakers, Churchmen, the most conscientious persons of every persuasion, have united and made a common cause. Let not Parliament be the only body that is insensible to the principles of national justice." In conclusion, he moved twelve resolutions, declaratory of the state of the trade in general, and in several islands, and affirming the propriety of discontinuing the importation.

As the lateness of the hour, when Mr. Wilberforce concluded, forbade a detailed debate, a few observations only were made; Lord Penryhn, Mr. Gascoyne, Sir William Young, and several other members, did not believe some of the mover's facts, and dissented from his deductions. On the other side, Mr. Burke strongly expressed his acquiescence; and the obligation conferred on the House, the nation, and all Europe, by the masterly, impressive, and eloquent manner in which Mr. Wilberforce had brought the matter forward. For order and force, his speech was equal to any effort in modern oratory; and perhaps not excelled even by the effusions of Demosthenes*. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox concurred in these opinions; the Speaker resumed the chair, the committee reported progress, and days were appointed for continuing the investigation.

On a subsequent day, when Mr. Wilberforce moved that the Speaker should leave the chair, that the committee might be resumed, Alderman Sawbridge, resisting it, contended that more evidence was necessary. Many members spoke; on the one side, the topics of Mr. Wilberforce's speech were enforced and dwelt upon; on the other, several grounds were taken. It was denied that the slave trade caused the barbarity of Africa; and, in proof, Mr. Henniker read an original letter from the King of Dahomey, a country three hundred miles from the coast, and consequently unaffected by the commerce in question, to King

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Debate.

Mr Burke.

Mr. Pitt and
Mr. Fox.

21st.
Further
debate.

Alderman
Sawbridge.

Mr. Henniker.

* For other opinions of this speech, all highly favourable, see *Life of Wilberforce*, vol. i. p. 219.

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George the First*. The writer presented his brother king with forty slaves, adding that, if forty times forty would be acceptable, he should have them. He was very desirous of trade, from which the distance of his abode had hitherto excluded him; but, as a proof of his liberal spirit, he was willing to give even to the extent of a thousand slaves for any commodity which pleased him, and was worth the price. As a proof of his own military prowess and great success in war, he stated that, beside the heads of generals and great officers, which had been preserved as trophies, he had paved four miles and a half before two of his palaces with the bones of slaughtered enemies, and was in hopes he should be able to complete the residue, amounting to seven miles, in the like manner. From the disgusting rant of this ignorant and ferocious barbarian it was to be inferred that the people of Africa were naturally inclined, without European instruction, to treat slaves and prisoners with cruelty. This deduction cannot be deemed conclusive, as it appears throughout the epistle that the writer and his subjects were much acquainted with European commodities, particularly fire-arms, which had nearly superseded the use of their accustomed weapons; that he well knew the nature of the slave trade, and desired, by means of it, to extend his dealings with the subjects of our country.

It was also strongly asserted, that, whatever might be the professions of her ministers, France would not hesitate to secure the benefits which, through ignorance or misconception, we might cast away. What had been her conduct with respect to America? M. De Vergennes pretended, to Lord North, that he detested the rebels; yet, in a short time, a fleet, equipped with men and ammunition, was sent to support these abominable rebels. Several members vindicated the planters against the charge of inhumanity, and shewed that slaves were treated with great care, attention, and kindness. The night was exhausted without forming

* Dated January, 1726.

a committee ; but several days were appointed for that purpose*.

Still no great progress was made : the examination of witnesses proceeded slowly, and, at last, the business was postponed to the following session ; Sir William Dolben's act for regulating the middle passage having been renewed.

Both parties shewed great heat and some intemperance in these debates† ; regulation was insisted on by some, as quite sufficient for all purposes ; while all notions of compromise were indignantly rejected by the other party. The middle passage was left by the supporters of the trade entirely to the discretion of government ; but the promoters of the abolition used it as their chief engine for keeping up the ferment of the public mind. An engraving was made, and profusely distributed, of the plan and section of a slave ship, in which the length and breadth of each apartment were exactly shewn, and the negroes displayed in exact numbers, as they lay in that miserable prison. Nothing could exceed the effect produced by this publication, to the prejudice, not so much of the trader who contrived, or the government which had omitted

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June 23.
Decision postponed.
Sir W. Dolben's bill renewed.

State of the dispute.

* Namely, May 26th, 27th, and 28th, and June 9, 12, 14, 16, 18, and 19.

† Mr. Clarkson, who most probably was present, thus describes the proceeding. " In the course of the debate, much warmth of temper was manifested on both sides. The expression of Mr. Fox, in a former debate, ' that the slave trade could not be regulated, because there could be no regulation of robbery and murder,' was brought up, and construed by planters in the House as a charge of these crimes upon themselves. Mr. Fox, however, would not retract the expression. He repeated it. He had no notion, however, that any individual would have taken it to himself. If it contained any reflection at all, it was on the whole Parliament, who had sanctioned such a trade. Mr. Molyneux rose up, and animadverted severely on the character of Mr. Ramsay, one of the evidences in the Privy Council Report, during his residence in the West Indies. This called up Sir William Dolben and Sir Charles Middleton in his defence ; the latter of whom bore honourable testimony to his virtues, from an intimate acquaintance with him, and a residence in the same village with him, for twenty years. Mr. Molyneux spoke also in angry terms of the measure of abolition. To annihilate the trade, he said, and to make no compensation on account of it, was an act of swindling. Mr. Macnamara called the measure hypocritical, fanatic, and methodistical. Mr. Pitt was so irritated at the insidious attempt to set aside the Privy Council report, when no complaint had been alleged against it before, that he was quite off his guard ; and he thought it right afterwards to apologize for the warmth into which he had been betrayed. The Speaker too was obliged frequently to interfere. On this occasion no less than thirty members spoke. And there had probably been few seasons when so much disorder had been discoverable in that House." History of the Abolition, vol. ii. p. 101.

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to regulate the voyages of these vessels, as against the West India proprietors, who could not controul the conduct of men totally independent. The emblem formerly published, and used as a common seal, still amply circulated, and in new forms, was not so effective as this appalling display; and, besides, it pointed to emancipation—a measure which, although always contemplated, was carefully kept from public view by the committee, who even went so far as to represent the fear of it as a vain alarm, or a shallow artifice of the planters*.

May 8.
Mr. Beaufoy's
motion on cor-
poration laws.

Mr. Beaufoy renewed his attempt in favour of the Dissenters, by moving that the House should resolve itself into a committee, to consider so much of the statute law as required persons to qualify for offices in corporations, or for offices civil or military, or places of trust under the Crown, by receiving the sacrament of the Lord's supper according to the rites of the Church of England. This proposition was introduced by a long speech, in which little novelty was contained. The hardships which pressed on the Dissenters were depicted; the history and origin of the corporation and test laws were adverted to, as proving that they were instituted merely to afford government a necessary protection against Popery; but now the interests of the church and state would be advanced rather than injured by the repeal. The mover made some observations on the institution of the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and quoted some passages from the form of its administration, which, however they might be intended, or however received in the assembly where they were uttered, were calculated to afford to persons less pious, or less pure, themes of profaneness and topics of ribaldry.

Debate.

Sir Henry Houghton seconded the motion, which was supported by Sir James Johnstone, Mr. William Smith, Mr. Martin, and Mr. Fox. On the other side were Lord North, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Windham, who amply answered the arguments advanced. The motion was negatived by an inconsiderable majority†.

Motion nega-
tived.

* Clarkson, vol. ii. p. 38.

† 122 to 102.

Without the support of a petition from any party, or the suggestion of a grievance from any individual, Earl Stanhope brought in a bill for relieving members of the Church of England from sundry penalties and disabilities to which by law they might be liable, and for extending freedom in matters of religion to all but Papists.

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May 18.
Lord Stan-
hope's motion
on general
freedom in re-
ligion.

His speech divided itself into several heads, referring to penal statutes, made in the times of Elizabeth and her successor, against those who omitted duly to attend divine service in church on Sundays and holidays;—to other enactments, of the same period, against those who fed on meat on prohibited days; those ancient statutes, from the days of Richard the Second to those of Henry the Eighth, which gave the power of excommunication; that of Charles the Second, which, as his lordship stated it, would make Protestant bishops Popish recusants if they went to court without subscribing a required declaration; and a law of James the First against the exportation of women. In the course of his speech, the noble earl cited the Holy Scripture, made an excursive comment on the canons of the church, and their want of force in these days; on the absurdity of one statute against marrying two wives, or one widow; and of another, denouncing equal penalties against dissimilar offences, and giving to peers the benefit of clergy, although they could not read; he alluded, also, to the repealed laws against witches, and warmly defended the liberty of conscience. He read his bill, descanting at length on each clause. The first abolished all penalties against those who did not attend divine service, reciting that, Almighty God having created the human mind free, consequently the right of private judgment in matters respecting religion is, and ever must be, the inalienable right of mankind, and, as such, ought always to be holden sacred and inviolable; and proposing to enact that all persons (Papists, on account of their persecuting and dangerous principles, excepted) should have free liberty to exercise their religion; and, by speaking, writing, printing, and publishing, to investigate

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July 9.
Bill rejected.A second
threatened.Produced,
July,
and rejected.Observations
of Lord
Abingdon.

religious subjects; and to instruct, by preaching and teaching, in such manner as they should judge most conducive to the promotion of virtue, social happiness, and eternal felicity.

On the motion for a second reading, the bill, having received a vigorous castigation from four eminent prelates, the Archbishop of Canterbury*, and the Bishops of Bangor†, St. Asaph‡, and St. David's§, was rejected without a division; but the noble author of it said he was determined to persevere; and if the right reverend bench would not suffer him to load away their rubbish by cartfuls, he would endeavour to carry it off in wheel-barrows; and if that mode of removal was resisted, he would take it, if possible, away with a spade, a little at a time. He then produced another bill, which he offered to present, and which was, "To repeal an act of Henry VIII. "and prevent vexatious suits relative to prosecutions "for tithes from the Quakers;" but, after a short conversation, he agreed to make the motion on a future day. He said that, in all probability, his second bill would meet with the same success as the first; and the Lord Chancellor seeming to nod assent, the noble earl, equally unmindful of the laws of good breeding and of good taste, said, that on another day he would teach the noble and learned lord law, as on that he had taught the bench of bishops religion. He did produce a bill, according to his promise, and it met its fate, according to his prophecy. On a motion for a second reading, the Earl of Abingdon, availing himself of the mover's own metaphor, bantered him on the employment he had chosen. "I do not know," he said, "whether the "noble earl is a freemason or not; but that he is a "mason, he himself has declared; for, as he said the "other day, his employment is to carry away rubbish "by cart-loads, wheel-barrows, or by shovelsful." He was sorry the noble lord was employed in such dirty work, so ill befitting his character and dignity. If the noble lord wished to be a lawgiver and statesman, let

* Dr. Moore. † Dr. Warren. ‡ Dr. Shipley. § Dr. Horsley.

him, after the manner of the great Lord Bacon, obtain reformation by building up and improving, and not by pulling down and destroying.

A sort of religious commemoration was endeavoured to be added to the services of the church, by setting apart a day of thanksgiving for the glorious revolution which had taken place exactly a century ago. An ineffectual attempt had been made to gain a subscription for the erection of a column at Runnymede, to celebrate the signature of Magna Charta; the present proposal was patronized by Mr. Beaufoy. No opposition, and little observation, occurred on his motion for leave to bring in a bill: Sir Richard Hill good humouredly observed that the motion reminded him of the canonization of the Popish saints, which generally took place fifty or an hundred years after their death.

Having crept slowly through the lower House, without debate, it was rejected by the Lords, on the motion that it should be read a first time. The Bishop of Bangor shewed that the landing of King William is commemorated in apt and beautiful terms of praise and thanksgiving, in the regular service for the fifth of November, which is thus made doubly to remind English Protestants of their deliverance from Popery and Popish tyranny. Some observations were made on the want of courtesy in expelling a bill before it had been read a first time; but the peers, notwithstanding a speech of historical criticism from Earl Stanhope, adopted the opinions advanced by the Bishop and enforced by the arguments of the Lord Chancellor*.

In the course of the session, Mr. Grenville, having accepted the office of Secretary of State, announced, in a letter to Mr. Hatsell, that the chair of the House of Commons must in consequence become vacant. The Marquis of Graham, seconded by Mr. Grosvenor, proposed Henry Addington, Esq.: and, while he pronounced a warm eulogy on the right honourable gentleman who had retired, he augured

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Bill for commemorating the Revolution.

March 24.
Passes the Commons.

Rejected by the Lords.

July 23rd.

June 5th.
Mr. Grenville
Secretary of State.

Mr. Addington
elected
Speaker.

* On a division, the numbers were 19 to 6.

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every advantage from the member he nominated. Mr. Welbore Ellis, supported by Mr. Montague, proposed Sir Gilbert Elliot, whom he had recommended on a former occasion. Observations were made on both sides, in which the individuals proposed were treated with the utmost respect by their opponents. On a division, the majority was in favour of Mr. Addington*.

August 1st.
Prorogation.

At an advanced period of the summer, Parliament was prorogued by commission. The speech delivered, on the part of his Majesty, was short; he thanked Parliament for its diligence; the House of Commons for liberality in the supplies, and, in conclusion, said, that although his good offices and those of his allies had not hitherto been effectual in restoring the general tranquillity of Europe, he had the satisfaction of seeing that the further extension of hostilities had been prevented, and that the situation of affairs continued to promise to this country an uninterrupted enjoyment of the blessings of peace.

Observations
on the session.

In exact proportion to the interest of the occasions, was the placid gentleness of the latter debates of the session, to the impetuous energy which had distinguished its more early proceedings. When it had pleased the great Ruler of earthly events to cast a dense and portentous cloud over the British horizon, thunderings and lightnings were the inevitable attendants; but when the alarming portent was removed, those agitations were found to have cleared the political hemisphere, and enabled the observer to calculate on clearer, brighter, happier days than those which had preceded. Although the personal and patriotic virtues of the King had, before his late indisposition, silenced the clamours which had been raised by factious malignity in the earlier periods of his reign, and reduced treasonable vituperation to the much lower tone of scurrilous libel, still a period of irritation, like that which had occurred, was wanted to call forth into full and grand display, the rooted, strong affection,

The King.

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Procession to
St. Paul's.
April 23rd.

and zealous loyalty which were implanted in the bosoms of his subjects. In the announcement of his malady, not the members of the Church of England, not the dissenting professors of Christianity alone, but all persons of every faith and persuasion offered, up in their several places of divine worship, supplications for his restoration. Equally general and ardent were the thanksgivings when that desired event had taken place. A procession was made to Saint Paul's cathedral, where the King, attended by his family, the ministers of state, and members of both Houses of Parliament, made his public and devout acknowledgments to the King of kings for the mercy vouchsafed to him. Every window in the streets through which his Majesty passed was converted into a platform, with elevated seats, which let at high prices, and the pavement was crowded with an exulting multitude. The metropolis evinced the public feeling by a general, brilliant, and spontaneous illumination. No clamorous mob paraded the streets to enforce the exhibition of lights, but every house, even in the meanest receptacles of poverty, freely exhibited the accordance of its inhabitants in the prevailing sentiment. Other towns and cities made a similar display. Festivals and entertainments were given by the principal nobility and foreign ambassadors, and all ranks seemed to vie in demonstrations of satisfaction. The King enjoyed the additional gratification of seeing the Queen, who, without stepping beyond her proper situation, had, during the trying crisis, so vigorously maintained his rights and consulted his feelings, no less than himself the object of enthusiastic love among all classes of his subjects*. If the exultation in the royal bosom could know any alloy, it was derived from information of the conduct of some, who, having enjoyed his confidence and seemed to live only in his smiles, had deserted his cause when hope and fear held out their allurements and alarms. These instances were few, but not confined altogether to the superior class of society; they formed a melancholy

* Dr. Watson, Bishop of Landaff, thought otherwise. See his *Memoirs*, vol. i. p. 365.

lesson, which all sovereigns, when their powers are diminished by calamity, must submit to learn.

Whatever differences of opinion might have prevailed with respect to the politics of those who were considered as the Prince of Wales's friends, or the measures likely to be pursued by them, had they attained to power, all parties agreed that the public conduct of his Royal Highness himself was not only above reproach, but intitled to the highest commendation. His position was new and arduous; his political attachments were avowed and undisguised, his personal difficulties were not a secret to any one, and that expostulations had passed, and something like estrangement had subsisted between his royal father and him, was a fact little disputed: yet, however inflamed or exasperated the language of party, however extreme the rights claimed for, or the restrictions imposed upon him, his language, as regarded his afflicted father, was always gentle and dutiful, and every word uttered by his authority, or accredited by him, breathed not only the sentiments of a pious son, but of a patriotic prince, anxious to prevent, what he considered, a degradation of the royal authority, while vested in him, but submissive to the judgment of the legislature, constitutionally pronounced.

To the heat which arose during this irritating conflict must be ascribed an event of an extraordinary description, although the result was not marked by disastrous consequences. The Duke of York, having thought proper to assert that Lieutenant Colonel Lenox, nephew and heir to the Duke of Richmond, had submitted, at a military club, to language which a gentleman ought not to bear, the Colonel applied to his Royal Highness, on the parade at Saint James's, to know what the words were, and by whom uttered. The Duke, very properly, ordered the Colonel to his post; but, when the parade was finished, sent for him to the orderly room, and, in the presence of all the officers, declared that he desired to derive no protection from his rank as a prince and his station as commanding officer; but that, when not on duty, he wore

a brown coat, and was ready, as a private gentleman, to give the Colonel satisfaction. This course of proceeding placed the Colonel in a most painful situation; inertness would have been stigmatized as baseness; haste as presumption. He dispatched a letter to every member of the club, requesting to be informed, by a fixed time, whether any of them knew of such words having been uttered; no one avowed himself to have spoken, or professed to have heard, them.

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Colonel Lenox then wrote to his Royal Highness, stating the result of his inquiries, and his own inability to recollect any occasion which could warrant the assertion which had been made. A meeting was in consequence appointed at Wimbledon. The Duke was attended by Lord Rawdon; the Colonel by the Earl of Winchelsea. The combatants were to fire at a signal. The shot of Colonel Lenox went so near the head of his antagonist as to remove one of his curls. The Duke did not fire; and, as he persisted in not doing so, the affair terminated. The seconds published an account of the meeting, in which they fully attested the bravery of both parties. The officers of the Coldstream, Colonel Lenox's regiment, at a general meeting, declared their opinion, that subsequently to the fifteenth of May, the day of the meeting at the orderly room, Lieutenant Colonel Lenox had behaved with courage; but, from the peculiar difficulty of his situation, not with judgment*.

May 26th.

The delegates from Ireland, who might have known before they quitted their home that their mission could have no effect, were received at Carlton House in a manner which became its royal inhabitant, and shewed his estimation of their personal character, and good intentions. His Royal Highness delayed for a few days his final answer to their address, "trusting that the joyful event of his Majesty's resuming the personal exercise of his royal authority would

Delegates
from Ireland.

* Annual Register, vol. xxxi. p. 208 to 210, Chronicle. A very absurd and intemperate letter on the subject was written by Theophilus Swift, and his perseverance in provocation procured him the notice of Colonel Lenox, by whom he was severely wounded in a duel.

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March 12th.

20th.

The ministry.

“ render it only necessary for him to repeat sentiments of gratitude and affection to the loyal and generous “ people of Ireland.” A few days verified these expectations, and the delegates received the Prince’s assurances of satisfaction at the opportunity which had been afforded him of acquiring a knowledge of their private characters, which had added to the high esteem he had previously entertained for them on account of their public merits. These gratifying civilities were the only reward that the delegates obtained ; the public neither hailed their arrival, nor cheered their departure. Addresses were voted in the Irish Parliament on his gracious answer ; but, in the House of Lords, twelve peers entered a protest against the proceeding, and another, very powerful and argumentative, was signed by Lord Mountmorris alone*.

The ministry had, by their conduct in the late struggle, gained immense advantages. It is ever becoming to be ranked among the defenders of the fallen and the helpless, and that position was clearly theirs. Pretensions in favour of royal right vehemently urged, might have drawn on them the odium of being too much attached to prerogative ; but, in the present case, their opponents had taken the least popular ground, and left to them the full enjoyment of the opinions which result from sustaining the dignity of the Crown, and with it the rights of Parliament. It is hardly too much to say, that, at this period, they enjoyed the favour and confidence of the public, quite as much as of the sovereign.

The
opposition.

If the conduct of ministers could by any be imputed to selfish and ambitious motives, their opponents displayed those impulses without disguise, and without reserve. They did not hesitate to affirm in Parliament that the minister was only anxious to delay the moment when a cabinet, which was already formed, should occupy the places of government†. Yet

* Seward’s Collectanea, vol. ii. p. 179.

† It was said that the contemplated arrangement was ;—first Lord of the Treasury, the Duke of Portland ; Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord John Cavendish ; Mr. Fox, Secretary of State for foreign affairs ; Lord Stormont for

in the pursuit of their object they evinced a strange combination of intemperate rashness and feeble procrastination. The prolonged debates, the incidental motions, the re-examination of physicians, and the length to which it was protracted, all originated in them. The only reason which could be assigned for this discrepancy between their views and their conduct was the conflict of rival interests, and the prevalence of irreconcilable jealousies, among those, who, if combined in one administration, must be expected to move as a firmly-united, compact, and consistent body.

During the absence of Mr. Fox, at the beginning of the royal malady, efforts had been made, and there was a fair prospect of success, to engage Lord Thurlow on the side of the Prince. The counsels of that learned and noble person were guided by principles of moderation, both in pretension and in argument. Such advice was perfectly congenial with the disposition of the Prince of Wales; but it was frustrated by subsequent events. Lord Loughborough, who considered, and not unfairly, that if the party, of which he had so long been a conspicuous member, attained the height of power, he would be entitled to claim the office of Lord Chancellor, saw, with regret and indignation, those proceedings which, although they were not public, could not be absolutely secret, and which, had they ended in confirming the power of the existing Chancellor, would have been a disappointment of his ambitious hopes, which he must have felt, and resented as a bitter affront. When Mr. Fox returned, he availed himself of the confidence reposed in him by that statesman, and is said to have been the author of those extreme assertions of right, which could not be more loudly sounded in the House of Commons than they

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Lord Thurlow.

the home department, or President of the Council; Lord Spencer, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland; Lord Fitzwilliam, first Lord of the Admiralty; the Duke of Northumberland, Master of the Ordnance; Colonel Fitzpatrick, Secretary at War; Earl Carlisle, Lord Privy Seal; the great seal in commission, Lord Loughborough, Chief Commissioner; Mr Burke, Paymaster of the Forces; and Mr. Sheridan, Treasurer of the Navy. Dutens, p. 128.

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Supposed
influence of
ladies at Car-
lton House.

Mr. Sheridan.

General state
of the country.

were echoed by him in the House of Lords. This was the rolling stone which the party were obliged, by constant and painful exertions, to force up the hill, but which as often recoiled, not only frustrating their labours, but impairing their position on the ground of contest.

Had the ferment, occasioned by the agitation of this dangerous topic, not existed, it is probable that the allusions to the supposed marriage of the Prince would not have been made, or would have been stifled without much effort ; nor would the absence of strong excitement have permitted the formation of a junto of females at Carlton House, to which the attention of the public was, under the favour of such a rumour, painfully directed. In this body, Mr. Sheridan was reported to hold principal sway, and, through them and the general effect of his powerful talents and engaging qualities, he obtained the foremost rank in the Prince's favour, and is said to have formed the highest expectations of public situation. Such claims, so founded, could not be viewed without repugnant feeling by his daily coadjutors, such as Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke ; but the more lofty members of the party, the high and ancient nobility, declared that they would not accept seats in a cabinet where he was to be a member. Amid such embarrassments, and with difficulties daily increasing, it is not to be considered wonderful that the party who expected power should seek delay, and perhaps, in many of them, motives separate from the feelings of humanity and of loyalty prompted the joy they felt at the King's recovery*.

In asserting that the state of the Continent promised to this country a protracted period of tranquillity, the King spoke a language well warranted by external circumstances. In fact, the British nation appeared, at this time, eminently and enviably happy. The wounds inflicted by the late war were little felt and

* Many of these facts will be found in Moore's Life of Sheridan, vol. ii. c. 13 ; some are derived from publications at the time, and from private information.

rapidly healing. Public credit flourished, and commerce was widely and beneficially extended; the nation seemed to enjoy the reward of its patience and magnanimity under past calamities and inflictions, in such a state of peace, tranquillity, and prosperity, that the warmest patriot could only express his true sentiment in a prayer that it might be permanent.

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CHAPTER THE SIXTY-SIXTH.

1789—1790.

French Revolution.—Causes assigned for this event—difference between the French and other revolutions.—Age of Louis the Fourteenth—licentiousness prevails—growth of infidelity.—The Regency.—Louis the Fifteenth.—Accession and character of Louis the Sixteenth.—The royal family.—Public Education.—Scarcity.—De Brienne minister.—He proposes taxes—rejected by the Parliament.—Bed of justice—the Parliament banished—recalled.—New plan of the minister—royal sitting—registration of taxes refused.—Conduct of the Duke of Orleans—he is banished—returns—States-general promised.—Other attempts of De Brienne.—Plan of a *cour plénière*—great secrecy—the plan discovered—d'Espréménil imprisoned.—Notables assembled—bed of justice—outline of the *cour plénière*—rejected by the Parliament—renounced by the Notables—resignation of De Brienne.—Administration of Necker—his anxiety to convoke the States-general—necessity of that measure—efforts of the Parliament.—Notables again assembled—States-general decreed—double representations of the *tiers état*—effect on the nation.—Causes of public fermentation—licentiousness of the press.—The Queen.—Clubs formed.—The Duke of Orleans.—Scarcity.—Deputies returned to the States-general.—Want of system in their convocation—they are presented to the King—opening of the sittings.—Destruction of Reveillon's manufactory.—Contest on verifications of powers.—Renunciation of pecuniary privileges.—Conduct of the King.—Death of the Dauphin.—National Assembly formed—some of the clergy secede from their

body—and are followed by the residue.—Royal sitting proclaimed.—Scene in the Assembly.—Oath taken in the Tennis Court.—Royal sitting.—Conduct of M. Necker.—Declaration of the King—energetic conduct of the Assembly.—Effect of these proceedings.—Union of the three orders.—Character of the Duke of Orléans—other popular members—Lafayette—Mirabeau—Royalist members—the Abbé Mauri—of M. Necker.—State of Paris—power assumed by the factions.—Seduction of the Gardes-françoises—troops collected.—Proceedings in the National Assembly.—Retreat of M. Necker.—Its effect in Paris.—The national colours and cockade established.—Conduct of the Duke of Orléans—conflict in the garden of the Tuilleries.—Conduct of the Assembly—a new government formed in Paris.—Arms obtained—national guard.—Capture of the Bastile.—State of the Court.—The King goes to the Assembly—conduct of that body.—Ministry dismissed—The King goes to Paris—reception.—More murders committed.—In the provinces—System in these proceedings—indifference of the Assembly.—Necker's triumph.—Observations—the legislative body—the King—the nobility—emigration.—Progress of the National Assembly—overthrow of privileges.—Remonstrances to the Assembly—a loan attempted—plate melted—patriotic gifts.—Pay to members.—Declaration of the Rights of Man—the King delays his sanction—persecution of religion—licentiousness of the press—violence of mobs—scarcity of bread—the regiment of Flanders sent to Versailles.—Dinners given—anger excited—misrepresentations—consequent proceedings—insurrection in Paris.—Proceedings at Versailles—National Assembly—arrival of the mob.—Deputation to the King—further proceeding of the mob—the King forced to assent to the declaration of the Rights of Man.—Arrival of Lafayette—his proceedings—and assurances.—State of the mob—they break into the palace—escape of the Queen—the royal family forced to go to Paris—their progress—they are lodged in the Louvre.

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French Revolution.

FROM the war which still raged between Russia and the Porte, and from all other transactions in the political world, attention is now diverted to an event of a more stupendous nature; most deeply affecting, in its progress, the interests and welfare of England and of Europe—the French Revolution. So widely extensive have been the effects of this great convulsion on the condition, the politics, the morals, and the religion of other communities, that it is impossible to narrate the history of any European nation without the mixture of details respecting France; as forming, not the principal object of the work, but necessarily introduced to explain the acts of governments, the motions of the people, and the principles and views of statesmen.

Causes assigned for this event.

Causes for this wondrous political phenomenon have been assigned by various writers*; some are too remote and general to bear particularly on the subject; and if, in producing them, the writers have shewn learning, research, and ingenuity, still the application is not sufficiently cogent and obvious to elucidate events by clear, certain, and defined propositions. Thus, when it is said that the invention of gunpowder, of printing, and the compass, the reformation of religion, and the discovery of America, were among the causes of the French revolution, the assertion, taken in a general sense, is true†; but they had no more actual effect on that than on every other great political event which has occurred. Causes more perceptibly operative are to be discovered in the recent history and modern transactions of France.

Time, the great operator of change, had produced more than usual effect in this kingdom. The springs of government were relaxed, the machinery defective, and it was easy to perceive, that, without great alteration, it could not be made to act certainly or benefi-

* This subject is treated on so amply in the various histories of France during the period in question, that reference on general heads would seem superfluous and affected; for some particular statements and opinions, authorities will be given.

† See Pagès *Histoire secrète de la Révolution*, vol. i. p. 266. Neckar on the French Revolution, vol. i. p. 3. Alison's *History of Europe during the French Revolution*, vol. i. p. lxi. Introduction.

cially. But it is useful to observe, that no revolution recorded in modern history resembles that of France. The removal of obnoxious rulers, the restoration of interrupted rights, or the repeal of oppressive and unjust laws, have generally formed the motive and the end of domestic revolutions. The constitution, or ancient state of the country, has always been considered as the object to be preserved, the centre around which all were to rally ; and although, in other revolutions where the authority of a governing or mother country has been rejected, a greater change has taken place in forms, still the original principles of the social union, the ranks of society, the distinctions of locality, and the tenure of property, were left undisturbed, and cautiously protected*. In France, on the contrary, every establishment, civil and religious, was to be destroyed, every trace of former times to be obliterated, and, that the change might be perfect and total, property was to be taken from those who believed they held it in absolute security, and the long-recognized divisions of the kingdom were to receive new limits, new forms, and new appellations. These great changes were not productive of each other ; innovations were not occasioned by the opposition which was directed against early efforts, by the exasperation which conflict, or the violence which success, occasioned ; they were the result of plans carefully laid down and maturely considered, nourished in the abstract moments of meditation, forwarded through the influence of the press, and perfected by the union of talent, resolution, and perseverance.

Difference between the French and other Revolutions.

In the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, the power of the crown and the fame of the nation were carried to an unexampled height. The nobles were controlled, the lower classes submissive ; the splendour of martial achievement and the lustre of gallant and expensive festivities threw a dazzling glory around the throne. Wits of the first eminence, in unprecedented number,

Age of Louis the Fourteenth.

* See Bertrand's Annals, vol. i. page i, Introduction.— Causes of the French Revolution, by Lord John Russell, p. 1.

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while they elevated the literary fame of their country, never failed to offer incense before the monarch, their best and surest patron, the nation's glory, joy, and hope. But even this period of exultation was pregnant with the seeds of future evil. The high-wrought enthusiasm which resulted from military achievement, and from public display, became relaxed toward the close of this vaunted reign, when the contemplation of ill-success in war and in treaty, baffled arms, an exhausted treasury, and an unemployed and impoverished people, introduced a train of reflection, which, although it did not immediately attack the person, invade the dignity, or alarm the security of the monarch, proved the prelude to many subsequent calamities.

Licentiousness
prevails.

In the court of Louis the Fourteenth, unbounded gallantry was practised; and if the forms of elegant breeding divested it of external offensiveness, the pernicious effects flowing from the general degredation of female virtue were soon experienced. The chivalric character assumed by the nobility was not always sustained by lofty virtues. Dissipation and extravagance, while they diminished the power of doing good, introduced the inevitable consequence of poverty, meanness, subterfuges, and dependency.

Growth of
infidelity.

The King, who was superstitious rather than pious, did not himself countenance any ridicule of religion or its establishments; but a race was rapidly growing into fashion, which, having begun with sharp sarcasm against some of the mummeries and follies of the Romish church, having held up to scorn the lives of cloistered pretenders, as opposed to their professions, proceeded to attack the more solid parts of the established faith, and even its great basis. Thus, while Louis sustained the high character of a hero, a cavalier, and a true believer, foundations were laid in his court for erecting a system intended to eradicate the principles from which alone such a character can spring.

The regency.

During the regency, vice, debauchery, and profaneness made rapid and alarming progress. The forms of decency were disregarded, profligacy walked

forth unveiled, infidelity made daring advances ; and, far from courting secret plaudits and concealed admirers, the enemies of religion assumed the higher ground, and, arrogating to themselves the title of powerful thinkers*, stigmatized as mean-spirited bigots all who were not disposed to join in their unholy contempt of revealed faith.

In the days of Louis the Fifteenth, the seeds which had thus been sown grew into a copious harvest. The King, a cold, shameless voluptuary, indifferent to the welfare of his people, and careless of his own fame, pursued pleasure without regarding the restraints of decency, and even when age and infirmity warned him to retire from the chase, even when he knew that the substance of enjoyment was beyond his grasp, he pursued the shadow with unabated eagerness, and maintained the shew of profligacy, when it could only make him the prey of mistresses, the dupe of parasites, and the scorn of all mankind. In his inglorious reign, the prosperity of the nation was visibly diminished, while the exchequer, exhausted through his want of economy, foresight, forbearance, and justice, was supplied by means, irregular in their administration, and precarious in their results. Infidelity, aided by the public disregard of moral virtue, became predominant. Philosophers, as they styled themselves, disseminated their opinions in dissertations, treatises, essays, satirical and blasphemous poems and romances ; they made the women their zealous proselytes, and mixed up their theories in works of elementary education, designed for the instruction of children, and of science intended for the guide of youth. While the court, the army, the professors of law and medicine, were infected with this horrible disease, the clergy, who should have imparted the antidote, were themselves the disseminators of the poison ; and it was not unusual to see priests, and even dignitaries of the church, treating with contempt the great truths of their holy calling, and living in a manner conformable with their impious tenets. In

Louis the
Fifteenth.

* *Esprits forts.*

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these observations it is not to be supposed that the whole French nation is described; far from it; among the nobility, the majority possessed hearts and understandings similar to those which had distinguished and elevated their ancestors; the military, for the most part, glowed with the manly, patriotic ardour of ancient days; and among the professors of the Gospel, many were found who held fast to the faith in which they had been educated, to which they were sworn, and for which they were ready to lay down their rank, their fortunes, and their lives. But the voice of fashion is not derived from the majority; where it cannot guide and govern assent, it paralyzes resistance, and makes vain all attempts at counteraction. A very feeble reasoner, armed with the cutting weapon of supercilious ridicule, and supported by the assenting laugh of vociferous wittlings, will carry away victory and applause from the firm, manly, and modest advocate of truth and sense*.

Accession and
character of
Louis the
Sixteenth.

Such was the state of France, when Louis the Fifteenth was succeeded by his grandson. This Prince inherited the virtues of his father; and they would have formed a passport to happiness and fame, but they were not calculated for the days in which he lived; nor of the quality required to reform a depraved people, or to re-establish a sinking state. He was reserved, prudent, modest, pious, and self-denying; always imbued with the best of principles, firm in maintaining them in himself, but too tranquil to insist on any sacrifices from others, or to retain his own resolutions when assailed by powerful persuasion. He wanted that persevering resolution, that manly firmness, which alone can enable a sovereign, in times of peril, amidst crafty intrigues and an infuriated populace, to preserve his own safety, and to secure the state.

The Queen.

The Queen, as already has been mentioned, lively, spirited, and inconsiderate in matters of expense, formed a striking contrast with Louis, and furnished their ene-

* As these statements are results and not details, authorities are not cited; but they are derived from all the writers of Histories, Memoirs, Essays, and Correspondence, from Voltaire to the present time.

mies with means of charging her with departing from the rules of propriety and of virtue, and him with tameness of soul and meanness of spirit. A strict attention to etiquette may, in the eye of philosophy, appear trifling; but it is highly important among a people always influenced by externals, and who, in proportion as they are restrained by display of superiority, or encouraged by familiarity, are the obsequious servants or the presumptuous censors of those who rank far above them*.

Had the reform of the public morals been possible in such an age, a great obstacle must have been found in the education of rising youth. Religious instruction was at least neglected, nor was any sound philosophical system presented as a substitute. From history, the student was taught to select brilliant passages, striking sayings, and acts of extreme or doubtful virtue, affording the means of surprising in conversation and perplexing in debate; but the true wisdom of history formed no part of their attainment. It followed, that writers, who decried and laboured to overthrow the historical facts disclosed in the Holy Scriptures, who counteracted, by strong examples or subtle inferences, the influence of virtue and chastity, but, most of all, they who mixed up daring impiety and undissembled immorality with bitter sarcasm, witty illustration, and ludicrous scurrility, were quoted, celebrated, and almost adored by the majority of readers. All these effects were produced, or at least powerfully aided, by a party which had long been formed and assiduously employed in attempts to eradicate Christianity and overthrow monarchy†.

From the earliest period of the King's reign, alarms and commotions had been excited on a supposed deficiency of grain. This alarm, kept up, as some believe, for revolutionary purposes, greatly increased the embarrassments of government, and augmented the difficulties occasioned by a defective and uncertain system of finance.

Public educa-
tion.

Scarcity.

* La Vallée, *Histoire des Factions*, &c. t. i. p. 7.

† Lord Orford's Works, vol. v. p. 122.

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LXVI.De Brienne
minister.

De Brienne aided by his blunders, if he did not forward through malice, the events which so rapidly ensued: his character was of the worst description; notwithstanding his elevated station in the church, he had made himself conspicuous by the avowal of atheism; and Louis, on a former occasion, had refused him a small employment on that ground. Even in the distress occasioned by three successive resignations, the King was with difficulty induced to invest him with the functions of prime minister*. His manifest want of judgment and skill, in business and in finance, soon lost him the momentary popularity acquired by opposing De Calonne. He proposed, as new taxes, a stamp duty, which was to have been followed by an impost on land, and on seigniorial rights. These were, in substance, the same with those attempted by his predecessor; and the Parliament of Paris, in refusing to register the decree, alleged, for the first time, that they had no authority to impose burthens on the people; that right belonged only to the States-general. They censured the government, and suggested reforms; they declared against *lettres-de-cachet*, beds of justice, evocations and cassations in criminal affairs, and against the banishment or arbitrary removal of individuals. Alarmed at these indications, the minister prevailed on the Sovereign to hold a bed of justice, where Louis, presiding in person, commanded the registration; the Parliament persisted in their refusal, and the members were banished to Troyes.

He proposes
taxes.Rejected by
the Parliament
of Paris.Bed of justice.
The Parlia-
ment banished.

Recalled.

New plan of
the minister.

They obeyed; but the act, which displayed more anger than vigour, produced no effect; it made a declared breach, an undisguised and open war, between the Sovereign, whose commands had before been undisputed, and a body which seemed constituted only to obey. The Parliament was soon permitted to return, and De Brienne, confiding in deceitful promises of support, resolved to obtain a decree for a loan of four hundred and twenty millions (£17,500,000), and a sanction for similar loans for the next four years. To

* Bertrand's Annals, vol. i. p. 38.

receive this edict, a full convocation of the Parliament, or royal sitting, was held; the Princes of the blood being summoned, and the King presiding in state. The loan was proposed, and, in hopes perhaps of conciliating popularity, the minister added a proposition for giving extensive privileges to the Protestants: but an opposition had been already arranged, of a nature more firm and consistent, and of a temper more daring, than had yet appeared. The King's command was uttered in vain; the registration of the decree was peremptorily refused; and a debate ensued, which had lasted nine hours, when the King, by virtue of his authority, commanded the clerk to register the edicts. The Duke of Orléans, in an imperious tone, asked the King whether the present meeting was a royal sitting, or a bed of justice? Being answered that it was a royal sitting, he protested against the registration as illegal; and, when the King had departed, prevailed on the whole body to join in his act. The Duke was banished to his estate at Villiers-Cotteret; and two of his partizans, Sabbatier and Freteau De St. Just, to different parts of the country. No relief to the necessities of government was derived from these measures: the banished Duke, on solicitation, was permitted to return to Paris; but the protest was unrevoked, although the King's decree was enrolled. The minister entertained the childish hope of appeasing the people by promising a convocation of the States-general in four years. The promise confirmed the claim, already growing popular, to such an assembly; but, as no reason was assigned for the delay, the proposal was considered a mere delusion, and the loan had no subscribers. Foiled in all these efforts, De Brienne proposed to issue paper money; but the project proved abortive; and, as a last resource, he endeavoured to establish courts of justice in the provinces, and an assembly, to be called *cour plénière*, in Paris. For this court there was no direct precedent in any recent period of history: indeed, its constitution, and even its existence at any period, was obscure and doubtful; but it was said to have been convoked in the earlier

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Royal sitting.

1787.
Nov. 7.

Registration of
taxes refused.

Conduct of the
Duke of Or-
léans.

He is banished

Returns.

Convocation
of the States-
general pro-
mised.

1788.
Other attempts
of De Brienne.

Plan of a cour
plénière.

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Great secrecy.

days of the monarchy. This plan was to have been kept a profound secret, until the day when, at a bed of justice, the King was to have commanded the registration of an edict by which all the superior courts of magistracy were to be suppressed or suspended, and their authority given to commissioners appointed by the Crown. A private printing house was established at Versailles; workmen were shut up and closely guarded; the necessary orders passed through the office of the prime minister, to prevent a disclosure of their purport: but these mysteries excited suspicion, and gave eagerness to curiosity. The secret was discovered; by what means is unknown. M. D'Esprémenil, who inveighed against it in Parliament, was seized within the very walls of the Assembly by an armed force, and imprisoned in the Isle of St. Marguerite, while M. De Monsambert, who had been equally energetic, was sent to the prison of Pierre-encise*. To counterbalance the opposition of the Parliament, the Notables were again convoked; troops were assembled to support the measures of government; but the public voice raged in undisguised reprobation of all these proceedings.

The plan discovered and denounced by M. d'Esprémenil.

He is imprisoned.

Notables again assembled.

Bed of justice.

Outline of the Cour plénière.

Rejected by the Parliament.

Renounced by the Notables.

Under circumstances thus ominous, the King held a bed of justice, and commanded the registration of his edict. It directed that the cour plénière should be composed of princes of the blood, peers of the realm, great officers of the crown, the clergy, marshals of France, governors of provinces, knights of different orders, a deputation of one member from every parliament, and two members from the chambers of councils, and it should be summoned on every public emergency. The Parliament protested against the plan, as an entire innovation, adding the just, but unexpected observation, that the King's authority could only be esteemed so long as it was supported by justice. The Notables, to whom M. De Lamoignon, keeper of the seals, made, in his Majesty's name, a like communication, received it in silence; but several peers, instead of supporting

* For particulars, see Lacretelle, t. vi. p. 252.—Thiers, t. i. p. 23.

the project, expressed their regret at seeing the fundamental principles of the kingdom violated ; and, while they were lavishing their professions of attachment to the person of their sovereign, concluded with apologizing for not entering on the functions assigned them, as inconsistent with the true interests of the King, which were inseparable from those of the nation.

This total and absolute failure of the minister's project was, in all ways, prejudicial to the cause of government ; repeated failures occasioned ridicule, ridicule grew into contempt, and contempt produced insubordination. Terrified at the difficulties of his position, De Brienne offered M. Necker the direction of finance, in subordination to himself, which was rejected with just indignation ; and the Archbishop*, at last, retired from office, loaded with the contempt of all parties ; the very mob, who had hailed his appointment with joy, pursuing him with execrations to his retreat, threatening to plunder his house, and burning him in effigy†.

M. Necker was recalled ; and, by his activity as a financier, his knowledge as a banker, and his influence among monied men, was able to procure an immediate supply, and keep the wheels of government in motion‡. Still he seemed more ambitious of the character of a legislator than a financier. The convocation of the States-general had been declared necessary by the Parliament of Paris ; the people had hailed the sound ; the press, now unrestrained, active, and powerful, was vehemently engaged in furthering the plan ; and the minister, devoted to its execution, was busy in arranging the system on which they were to be assembled, and the manner in which their duties should be performed.

It was no longer possible to deny the necessity of a legislative convocation. The Parliament had disclaimed the right of registering pecuniary edicts ; the

Resignation of
De Brienne.

1788.
Aug.
Administra-
tion of Necker.

His anxiety
for a convoca-
tion of the
States-general.

Necessity for
that measure.

* He had recently been translated from Thoulouse to Sens.

† See Thiers, t. i. c. i.—Lauretelle, t. vi.—Rabaud, History, p. 54.—Necker on the French Revolution, v. i. p. 17 to 29.—La Vallée, t. i. p. 33 to 44.—De Montyon, p. 277.

‡ De Montyon, p. 283.

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LXVI.Efforts of the
Parliament of
Paris.

King, by the unprecedented attempt to establish the *cours plenirèes*, had acknowledged the want of a new power in the state, so clamorously demanded by the people. But now the Parliament of Paris, notwithstanding the vigour of its former edict, being apprehensive that, if the proposed assembly should be convoked, and rendered permanent, they, and all similar bodies, would in effect be annihilated, passed a vote that the States-general must be constituted in the same manner as in 1614. This declaration was resented as intended to reduce the people of that day to the condition of the half-enfranchised clowns under Philip le Bel; and thus the Parliament exchanged the grateful memory of their former opposition for contempt and hatred. Riots, insurrections, and disorders occurred in Paris, and in many parts of the kingdom; and, while the arrangements on this momentous subject became daily more and more necessary, the task of gratifying expectation and yet preserving authority became additionally difficult*.

Notables
assembled.1788.
Dec. 27.
States-general
decreed.Double repre-
sentation of the
Tiers Etat.Effect on the
nation.

M. Necker again assembled the Notables, as a body upon which government might rely, and which had not forfeited the confidence of the people. The result of their deliberations, declared in a royal proclamation, was, that the body should consist, as before, of representatives of the clergy, the nobility, and the people; but, contrary to the decision of the Notables, the proclamation contained this strongly marked and fatal difference—that the number of deputies for the tiers état, as the Commons were called, should equal that of the other two classes united†. They were to assemble at Versailles, on the fifth of May following.

From this moment the whole nation was occupied with plans and expectations of reform, not limited to the redress of particular grievances, but comprising the overthrow of every thing established. Much there undoubtedly was in the French government which loudly called for improvement; but they who now

* Lacretelle—Thiers—Rabaut, p. 56—Necker, vol. i, p. 48.

† Necker, the patron, if not the author, of this measure, says all that can be said in defence of it, in his work on the French Revolution, vol. i. pp. 59—65.

solicited power through the means of popularity, seem to have considered that destruction, total, absolute destruction, must precede amelioration*. Composed, as the kingdom was, of separate sovereignties united under one chief, gained through alliances, or acquired by compact or by conquest, it could not be said that France had a constitution. There was no general volume, or known mass of written or unwritten law, which the whole kingdom was bound to obey and disposed to maintain. In assenting to an annexation of their provinces to the dominions of the King, many communities had reserved their own local laws and customs, and many nobles had retained their rights, privileges, and protections. The clergy too were guarded with temporal immunities, which secured to them the rights of lords over their domains; and an exemption was claimed by that class from some modes of taxation and of public service. Thus were the superior and lower classes of the community effectually severed from each other: an union, by moderate requisitions on one part, and just concessions on the other, might have been effected; but a spirit had gone forth, whose prevailing influence rendered men adverse to the maintenance of any portion of the civil or religious establishment, contemptuous of the claims of rank, and jealous of all privileges which raised any one above the level of perfect equality.

These opinions did not arise spontaneously, nor were they entirely the accidental produce of irreligious and libertine principles, imparted in the course of a misguided education, or an indiscreet intercourse with corrupt companions. A system was formed, secret societies were established†, and plans were so well laid as to be easily developed; plans which, if they had

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Causes of the
public ferment-
tion.

* *Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat*, vol. i. p. 74.

† Much has been written on the subject of these societies. Of their existence, I apprehend, there can be no reasonable doubt. It may be said that the Abbe Barruel, and even Professor Robison, have indulged in fancy, or given too much way to credulity. These charges are not altogether just; but the fact that such societies did exist is too well proved by writers of every party, in works of every description, to leave the general question doubtful. See Barruel, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire du Jacobinisme*.—Robison's *Proofs of a Conspiracy*.—Mirabeau sur la Secte des Illuminées; life of Count Cagliostro.—La Vallée, t. iii. p. 17. And innumerable other authorities might be added.

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not been so preconcerted, would have afforded reason to wonder at their extent, and at the exactness and promptitude with which they were executed. Beside these secret societies, fashion, mingling with politics, occasioned the formation of assemblages in which persons of rank and quality, imbued with strong political principles, were aided by a race of wits, adverse to all settled forms of government, and to all revealed religion, who denied the expectation of a future state, and the very existence of a Creator.

Licentiousness
of the press.

Impelled and supplied by such a party, the press assumed an unprecedented boldness. Discussion was carried to the extreme on every point, while libels of the grossest and most disgusting description, reflecting on the Queen, the princes of the blood, and all persons who were not devoted to the revolutionary cause, and expressed in terms calculated to poison every mind, were vended in shops and distributed by hawkers at low prices.

The Queen.

Incensed at the treatment she had experienced in the affair of the necklace, and deeply wounded by the thought that she should have been considered capable of becoming a party to such a disgraceful fraud, hurt at finding that the popularity she had endeavoured to acquire was withheld from her, at a moment when it would have been of so much importance, the Queen discarded from her deportment all that careless gaiety which had given so much advantage to her enemies, and kept and enforced all the observances of courtly etiquette. It was too late; personal and party hatred had grown too powerful to be restrained: she was known to disfavour the plan of convening the States-general, and every species of calumny was employed against her. Beside imputations of vice and grossness which degraded her below the most infamous and depraved of her sex, she was accused of having endeavoured to terrify the King, by placing the picture of Charles the First in his chamber, and by predicting that the States-general would be but a renewal of the long parliament. Her affections, it was said, were all German, and not French, and that immense sums,

drawn from the treasury, were remitted to her brother ; that she undervalued the French nobility, in comparison with that of her own country ; and was actively engaged in a plot for restoring Lorraine and Alsace to the house of Austria*.

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Fictions so base and groundless could not have been invented, eagerly listened to, and loudly repeated by persons of all classes and degrees of information, but for the influence of clubs, which were formed in all parts of the metropolis, and which, through the inattention, or more probably the corruption, of the police, were permitted to hold their meetings uninterrupted, although the dangerous tendency of their speeches, resolves, and operations, was well known. In them were to be found the most active men of letters, unemployed lawyers, and many other daring and adventurous characters. From them too emanated those names and distinctive appellations, such as Aristocrat and Democrat, which, in their subsequent modifications, influenced opinion, inflamed passion, conferred honour, or led to contempt, or even to death†.

Clubs formed.

All these contrivances of evil could not proceed without the guidance of some powerful hand, the superintendence of some distinguished head, the support of some well-replenished purse. These were afforded in the person of the Duke of Orléans, a distinguished prince of the blood, and the possessor of an immense fortune ; who, impelled by an overweening and insatiate ambition, wished to be popular, without exhibiting dignity or virtue, or qualifying his unbounded extravagance by any display of benevolence. His residence, the Palais Royal, became the centre, in which were collected all who were leagued against the religion, the government, and institutions of the country, and who, according to their respective degrees in station or popularity, were admitted to a close or more reserved confidence. Thus, while in the first rank stood Mirabeau and men of his stamp, another degree was assigned to

The Duke of
Orléans.

* La Vallée, t. i. p. 47.

† Same, p. 49.

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Brissot, Bailly, and those who were in a certain measure advanced in literary reputation; below them, were Camille Desmoulins and some individuals of aspiring character and active minds; while to Petion, St. Huruge, Cloots, Légendre the butcher, and Santerre the brewer, parts were assigned conformable to their characters and corresponding with their means of exciting and guiding the lower class. Many ladies of high quality, and others of tainted reputation, aided by their charms and persuasions the general influence of this dangerous junto.

The precise aim of the Duke of Orléans has not been disclosed: it was supreme power; but whether he aspired to be king, lieutenant-general of the kingdom, or by what other title he intended to be designated, is not exactly known. Nor were his proceedings directed by ambition alone; a rancorous hatred of the sovereign and his brothers, and still more of the queen, embittered and envenomed by the affront of his late banishment, urged him to those excesses which so much contributed to the overthrow of the monarchy, while his own purse was drained to the lowest ebb in supplying means to carry on his designs. Many who co-operated with him had sufficient discernment to despise his person, and to laugh at his pretensions; but his rank, his power, and his purse, while it lasted, were materials too necessary, and instigations too powerful, to be undervalued by those who united themselves as his party*.

Scarcity.

1788.

July 13.

To these means of exciting popular discontent and feelings of anger, a scourge of Providence was added. A hurricane of extraordinary fury had ravaged the country, and destroyed the hopes of a plenteous harvest, and the winter was uncommonly severe. Rumours of a probable scarcity were not only spread by

* See *Histoire de la Conjuration de Louis Philippe Joseph Duc d'Orléans*, par M. Montjoye, in three volumes, 8vo. If it be alleged, as with truth it may, that this author is too decided a partizan to obtain implicit credit on all points, yet with equal truth it may be averred, that in all the great leading facts in his work, he is borne out by all the writers of the history of those times, and that, with respect to the conspiracy of the Duke, every individual, who, in subsequent years gained ascendancy in France, was proved beyond denial, and often by his own confession, to have been an active member of this faction.

the malignant manufacturers of irritating reports, but were confirmed by edicts framed by Necker, affirming the deficiency of grain, and directing measures of alleviation. It is said that these measures caused the scarcity, by preventing the free conveyance of corn, and checking the spirit of commercial enterprize*; it was used by the factious as a topic of obloquy against the court, who were accused of forestalling and retaining this indispensable article of subsistence, that they might at pleasure distress and even starve the people. On the other hand, it has been affirmed, that the wealth and credit of the Duke of Orleans were employed in speculations which placed this formidable engine of popular excitement entirely in his power†. The last assertion is not confirmed by any authority; the first is utterly void of foundation.

In the projected assembly of the States-general, no principles were established or arrangements made which could secure the government or give efficiency and respectability to the representation. Among those returned by the nobility were many of those subtle, daring, enterprizing men, who had introduced themselves with a view to corrupt and divide that order; and the ecclesiastical members were principally chosen from among the inferior clergy, without livings, and without property. Of the three hundred members who composed their body, two hundred and eight were not possessed of any ecclesiastical dignity. Many hoped to see in the tiers état something similar to the English House of Commons; but there could be no such resemblance. On making the returns, local or patrimonial influence was of no value or effect; and the elector, as well as the representative, was exempt from the condition of possessing any property. Many of the deputies were consequently men of shewy talents, bold pretensions, ardent for change and subversion. Among their number of six hundred, were three hundred and seventy-four provincial lawyers, of

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Deputies re-
turned to the
States-general.

* See a sensible note on this subject in Nicholls's Recollections, vol. ii. p. 184.

† See Histoire de la Conjuración du Duc d'Orléans, t. i. c. iii. p. 154.

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1789.

whom very few had been distinguished for ability or integrity; there were also a great many men of letters and orators used to inspire and astonish the popular clubs and meetings*. A more subtle and in effect more dangerous class was formed of men who were better bred and more extensively educated, men who had resolved on great changes, without considering practically the extent to which they should proceed, or agreeing on any form or system to be substituted. Very few, except the highest of the nobility and the most dignified of the clergy, thought of maintaining the system in its existing state.

Want of sys-
tem in con-
voking the
States-general.

It seems wonderful, and adds to the recorded specimens of inconceivable blindness in those to whom the fate of nations is entrusted, that when a course so unusual as that of convoking the States-general had been resolved on, when the dangerous measure of allowing a double representation to the tiers état had been agreed to, no positive direction was given as to the manner in which the three bodies, clergy, nobility, and commons, should meet, verify their powers, sit, and vote. This omission has given rise to an imputation of treachery in Necker: he moved the machine, and he could not have been deceived through want of knowledge of mankind in general, or of the plots and intrigues which swayed the times†.

1789.
May 4.
They are pre-
sented to the
King.

Versailles was selected as the place of meeting, and on an appointed day all the deputies were presented to the King. They formed a great procession, and an immense crowd assembled from the neighbourhood of the royal seat and from Paris. The court most injudiciously exhibited a gorgeous display of splendour, ill suited to the state of finances which occasioned the assembly. The king, the queen, the princes of the blood, and the favoured courtiers, already objects of popular hatred, shone in a blaze of gold

* *Memoirs of the French Revolution*, by the Marquis de Bouille, p. 88.

† Madame de Stael, the daughter of Necker, writing nearly thirty years after the event, and apprized of all the consequences, treats the deliberation in separate chambers as a proposition against which all enlightened men must unite in opinion; "for," she says, "independently of its radical injustice, it would make the termination of any affair an impossibility." *Considerations sur la Révolution française*, t. i. p. 192.

and diamonds; the clergy were attired in all the pomp of the Romish priesthood. To these two orders the folding doors were thrown open, and with lofty aspect they advanced to the upper end of the hall, while the commons, in a dress which exceeded common plainness, and might be called mean, followed, and, only one of the doors being opened to them, took their appointed seats. The crowd, while the courtiers passed, preserved a dead silence; the transit of the clergy was denoted by a discontented murmur; but the tiers état, in general, and some of its members in particular, were hailed with shouts which rent the air, and denoted the hopes and sentiments of the people.

On the following day, the States met for the transaction of business. The king, M. Barentin the chancellor, and M. Necker, each delivered a speech, displaying the disordered state of the finances, and recommending strenuous efforts for their re-establishment. Care, patience, and justice, might have effected this object; but faction had determined that all attempts should be frustrated. Beside preparing and instructing the crowd who attended at the beginning of the sitting, mobs and riotous meetings were organized in the provinces and in Paris, and an overbearing and tumultuous expression of popular will, attended with acts of destruction against property, shewed that safety could consist only in yielding to the clamorous voice of party.

A striking instance occurred just before the opening of the States-general. A paper-stainer, named Reveillon, was pointed out by the public agitators as an enemy to the poor, who had said he would reduce the pay of his workmen to fifteen sous (7½d) a day, that bread was too good for them, and that they should learn to live upon potatoes. The mob burned him in effigy in the *Place Royal*, and then, in immense numbers, proceeded to his establishment in the Faubourg St. Antoine, which they broke into, plundered, and laid waste. A body of troops, under the Baron de Besenval, who attempted to disperse the invaders, being assailed with missiles, attacked in their turn, and

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LXIV.

1789.

5th.
Opening of
the sittings.

April 28.
Destruction of
the manufac-
ture of Reveil-
lon.

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1789.

did not dispel the riot until nearly five hundred had been sacrificed. Reveillon, far from being such a man as was represented, had, during the whole hard winter, employed all his usual hands, and made ample distributions for relief of the poor. Not one of his own workmen joined in the outrage; but, on examination of the dead bodies, it appeared that two of them were convicts who had escaped while under sentence of death, and the others abandoned desperadoes, many of whom had poisoned themselves by drinking chemical preparations which they mistook for ordinary spirituous liquors. To prove that this outrage was instigated and prepared by some person of superior rank and opulence, it is observed that every one of these wretches had silver to the amount of eight or ten shillings about his person.

May 6th.
Contest on the
verification
of powers.

A topic of difference, undoubtedly foreseen and prepared for by the popular party, arose on the verification of the powers of the deputies. All the members elected to each of the estates sat by right of birth or privilege of station. In their election two assemblies were formed in two bodies: the first declared who should be electors, these, when thus appointed, returned the deputies*, and all the persons elected received written instructions from their constituents. On the meeting at Versailles, the nobility and clergy retired into separate apartments, leaving the great hall to the more numerous body; but the *tiers état* insisted that all the powers should be verified in the same place, and all the deputies form one body. This proposition comprised, almost in its terms, the extinction of all authority, and even independence, in the superior classes, and, for more than a month, it was the subject of daily contention and struggle. The instructions given to the deputies were strongly imbued with the principles, feelings, and opinions prevalent at the time. In those given to the *tiers état*, the spirit of change and reformation could alone be expected; but in many places, particularly in Paris,

* Lacretelle, tom. vi. p. 289.

and Dauphiné, the nobility returned representatives who had shewn their attachment to the popular cause; and the parochial clergy, who favoured Necker's system, returned deputies in opposition to their bishops and the great patrons of benefices. Thus it appeared that, should the three bodies be united, an overwhelming majority would range in the ranks of democracy. To prevent the evils evidently to arise from such a state of things, the contest on the verification of powers in one general assembly was protracted, although the result could not be doubtful. The privileged orders were contending for their existence; but their opponents had determined that they should not exist. Still an appearance of moderation was sustained. Conciliatory propositions were sent, and conciliatory commissioners appointed by the tiers état, and by the clergy; the nobility refused to nominate any, and adhered to their resolution to continue entirely separate; but on this point they were not unanimous*. Messages were sent from the tiers état requiring the clergy to declare, without delay, whether they would unite or not, and insidiously invoking them, in the name of the God of peace, to join in effecting concord.

The clergy and the nobility, each acting from their instructions, formally renounced their pecuniary privileges; but the time for such a concession was past: had it been made a few months earlier, the necessities of the state might have been relieved, and the present crisis avoided, or at least deferred.

May 20th—
22nd.
Renunciation
of pecuniary
privileges.

The tiers état prosecuted, without disguise, their determination to become the ruling, in fact the only, power; and newspapers were formally licensed to report their proceedings†.

May 19th.

* The division on the first question, the verification of powers, was, in the clergy 133 for, and 114 against the separate verification: in the nobility, 188 for, and 114 against.

† From this period may be dated the effectual commencement of a Journal called *Le Moniteur*, which was so long recognized as speaking the voice of government, that its statements, even if they cannot be received as true, must at least be considered authentic. Its publication did not begin until the 24th of November, 1789, and then, for a few months, it did not report in detail the proceedings of the legislative body; but, in February 1790, another Journal having been discontinued, it gave the debates daily, and, as nearly as it could, the very words of the speakers. When collected, and published in volumes (in 1796),

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1789.
Conduct of
the King.

June 3rd.
Death of
the Dauphin.

6th.

June 17th.
National
Assembly
formed.

During these transactions, the King acted with the benevolence which, in better times, would have secured for him the admiration and love of his subjects, and with the weakness which, in the present period, exposed him to censure and to danger. He recommended conciliatory measures, and permitted the committees formed for that end to be held in presence of his ministers; but he neither supported the resistance of the nobility, nor forwarded the attempts of the tiers état. In fact, no consistent plan of conduct was prepared for him by his confidential advisers; and thus his conduct was made to waver between concession and resistance; the one used when it was no longer possible to conciliate, the other resorted to when the adverse body had gained strength sufficient to overpower and deride it. Even his personal feelings were not respected. Affliction had visited him in the death of the Dauphin, who, not unexpectedly, and for him not unhappily, expired at Meudon. A deputation from the tiers état nevertheless introduced themselves into his Majesty's presence, to urge their claims and demand his interference.

A new and much bolder measure than all which had preceded, hastened the termination of the contest. The tiers état, by their own authority, without the assent of the King, or either of the other orders, without petitions or addresses from the people, and in direct violation of the terms of their instructions, declared themselves a National Assembly. This tremendous usurpation occasioned neither resistance nor remonstrance, but was sanctioned by uncontrolled applause. The results of their deliberations were termed decrees, and received the authority of laws, by the force of the assembly alone. Nor was the intent of the resolution disguised. In supporting the motion for the new denomination, the Abbé Sieyes, who, as a

the compiler went back to the 5th of May, 1789; and, in an abstract, related all proceedings from the first assembling of the States-general. He also prefixed a long and useful, although not impartial, introduction, containing a view of the established government of France, and a detailed account of the different forms of representative and deliberative assemblies which had been convened in former days.

writer and speaker, met much attention, put the question on this footing :—" Who are you ?" he said, apostrophizing the nobility, " your chamber represents " hardly a hundred and fifty thousand persons ; we " are the authorized agents of five-and-twenty millions. " Were we longer to delay through complaisance, we " should permit the obstinacy of a few thousands to " stifle the will of so many millions."

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1789.

Before this violent resolution had been adopted, the firmness of the clergy was shaken. After a deliberation with the nobility, in which the majority of their body still maintained the principle of separation, three *curés**, then six more, presented themselves in the hall of the tiers état, and verified their powers. After the vote for a national assembly had been carried, the majority of the ecclesiastical body agreed to an union, and appointed an early day to verify their powers as required.

Some of the clergy secede from their body.

June
13th—14th.

18th.
and are followed by the whole body.

In this alarming crisis, M. Necker advised the King to proclaim a royal sitting, and to declare, in person, his intentions and views respecting the formation and proceedings of the States-general. If such a measure could at any time have been attended with success, that time was obviously past, and those declarations, which, if they had preceded the convocation of the Assembly, or even if they had been made at the first meeting, might have produced some good effect, were now, after such long postponement, and when pretensions advanced and resisted had occasioned so much irritation, calculated only to increase the ferment, and direct the tempest of popular fury toward the person of the Sovereign. Heralds proclaimed the royal sitting, and announced that, until it could take place, the meetings of the deputies must be suspended. Workmen having taken possession of the hall, to make necessary preparations, a guard, stationed at the door,

Royal sitting proclaimed.

June 20th.
Scene in the Assembly.

* This word is used as most fit to describe the portion of the clergy to which it belongs. The word *curates*, in its modern and usual sense, would not be equivalent to the French term. Nor would the word rector represent it exactly, as a *curé*, although a cure of souls was committed to him, had not necessarily the rights either of a rector or vicar in England.

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1789.

Oath taken in
the Tennis
Court.

prevented the entrance of the deputies, who consequently formed groups in the streets, every one detailing and exaggerating the tyrannical measures which were to be adopted, and the danger to which the people were exposed. In this ferment, they repaired to the Tennis Court of the palace, and there made that famous declaration, confirmed by an oath and ratified by the signature of all the members*, "that they **would** never separate, but would continue to meet, "wherever circumstances should require, until the "constitution of the kingdom and the regeneration of "public order should be established and settled on a "permanent basis."

23rd.
Royal sitting.Conduct of
M. Necker.Declaration
of the King.

At the royal sitting, the King made the declarations prepared for him by M. Necker, altered in a slight degree, but much to that minister's dissatisfaction, by his Majesty in council. This fact was unknown to the Assembly and to the public; but, when all the other ministers took their places around the Sovereign, the seat of M. Necker was vacant. The Keeper of the Seals read the first declaration, which directed that, in matters of finance and internal government, the three orders should deliberate together, but that subjects of constitutional regulation should be discussed by each order separately. The second declaration guaranteed the periodical assembling of the States-general, the extinction of all privileges in matter of taxation, the abolition of the *corvée*, or highway duty, which had been much complained of as unjust and oppressive; the assurance of the public debt, the removal of restraint from trade and industry, the establishment of states in every province, and the full enjoyment of personal liberty, except in cases where internal commotions might render the suspension necessary. To these proposals, which, with proper revision and explanation, might have satisfied every reasonable expectation, the King, under different advice from that of M. Necker, added a sentence which sounded like a threat, and, in the fevered state of

* One only, Martin De Castelnauary, refused to affix his name.

men's minds, was calculated to destroy all the effect of his benevolent expressions. "If you desert me," he said, "in this undertaking, I alone will accomplish the happiness of my people." He then commanded the deputies to adjourn until the following day, when they were to assemble in their respective halls.

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1789.

Louis departed, followed by the nobility and all the clergy who had not previously separated from their order. The tiers état, in defiance of the royal mandate, remained. M. De Brézé, Grand Master of the Ceremonies, then said, "Gentlemen, you have heard the intentions of your Sovereign;" but the Comte de Mirabeau exclaimed, "Yes, Sir, we have heard intentions which have been suggested to the King; and you, who are not the interpreter of his intentions; you, who have neither seat nor vote in this place; you have no right to remind us of his speech. I declare that we will not quit our post until expelled by the bayonet." This declaration was warmly echoed by many members; workmen were injudiciously introduced to remove the hangings and the seats; but the Assembly proceeded in its deliberations; and, on the motion of Mirabeau, decreed that the person of every member was inviolable.

Energetic
conduct of the
Assembly.

This sitting was calculated to dispel any illusion, if any could yet remain, of the royal authority. The proceedings of the court, no less than the contrivances of the factions, contributed to its destruction. The King was led to put forth the assertion of a power which, it was obvious, he no longer possessed. The offensive forms, which had given so much disgust at the opening of the States-general, were still maintained. The nobility and higher clergy appeared in gorgeous array, while the deputies of the tiers état were still obliged to enter with only one folding door opened, and the hall was surrounded with troops; yet when the King's orders were contumaciously defied, and disobeyed; when a prepared mob insulted him on his departure from the hall, no one was found to lead the troops to act, or even to make a display; but, instead of the bayonet, which they had defied, the Assembly

Effect of these
proceedings.

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was dispersed by the sound of the hammer, the clatter and cries of artizans, and the dust which was created by their operations. It may be said, that the efforts of the nobility were prevented by the King's resolution that no man should be sacrificed, not a drop of blood shed in his cause. If they were restrained by this very childish declaration, no menace should have been used, no ostentation of force resorted to, nor any circumstance introduced which could irritate men who were struggling for untried power and unusual consideration. The King was a victim, alike to the factious intrigues of his enemies, the insidious plans of M. Necker, the ill-advised interposition and subsequent indifference of his friends; but, most of all, to his own want of resolution, his flexibility to persuasion, and his want of firmness to enforce resolutions which he could declare to be right, yet tamely see counteracted and defied.

Union of the
three orders.

25th.

27th.

With the royal sitting, the dispute between the tiers état and the privileged orders may be said to have ended. Following up their resolutions, nine of the clergy united with the tiers état: and forty-seven of the nobility, headed by the Duke of Orléans, adopted the same measure. Two days more produced a complete junction, although a few deputies of each of the higher classes renounced their mission, and refused to verify their powers. They who entertained a hope that this event would produce harmony, or even tranquillity, must have been little versed in the human character; the members of the superior orders felt themselves vanquished, degraded, mortified; while those of the tiers état, assuming the air of victors, commanders, and protectors, evinced an insolence which rendered the situation of the others more galling, and tended to a perpetual irritation.

Character of
the Duke of
Orléans.

In the body thus formed were some members whose character and conduct had a material influence on subsequent events. At the head of those must be placed, on account of his rank, wealth, and malignity, the Duke of Orléans. From the first meeting of the States-general he had lent all his influence to distress

and ruin his near relative on the throne. Whatever might be the precise end sought by his ambition, he brought to the accomplishment of it neither mental resources nor personal bravery. His deficiency in both made him the jest of the country. Whether influenced by timidity or a better principle, he refused the presidency of the Assembly when it was offered.

Many other individuals might be properly described in a history of France; but, in this work, it may be sufficient, on account of their subsequent renown, to mention Bailly, Sieyes, Robespierre, Target, Thouret, Barrere, Barnave, Duport, the two Lameths, and Talleyrand Perigord, bishop of Autun, as having taken a share adverse to the King in the discussions and proceedings of the Assembly. Lafayette, who contrived to attract a great degree of popular notice, is more particularly intitled to attention. Descended of a family of the highest class, and endowed with ample wealth, his weak mind was overloaded with the applause he received for his share in the American contest; and, while his flatterers termed him the deliverer of the new world, vanity led him to believe that he could be the regenerator of the old. But, at a great distance from all these, elevated by the powers of his mind, the energy of his character, and the strength of his judgment, stood the Comte de Mirabeau. In his personal conduct he was most disadvantageously the reverse of Lafayette: his life was a series of debaucheries and meannesses: in his political character, infinitely elevated above him and all others by whom he was surrounded, he stood forth, at once, by his eloquence, vigour, and daring promptitude, the head, the inspirer, the undisputed governor of a party. Stigmatized by his numerous acts of misconduct, he was rejected in his own province as a representative of the nobility, to whose class he belonged. Known by his popular writings and eloquent speeches, he was easily returned to the tiers état. Attached to the Duke of Orléans, he was received with unbounded acclamations at the meetings of the States-general; and in all the conflicts

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1789.

July 3rd.
Other
members.

Lafayette.

Mirabeau.

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1789.

which had hitherto taken place, he was, more than any other person, looked up to, feared, and felt. Yet, although he laboured to support the popular cause, he was anxious, from the beginning, to prevent the overthrow of the monarchy, and expressed his regret, when the agency of mobs was resorted to, that his party should let loose a ferocious animal, whom they would never afterward be able to restrain.

Royalist
members.

Abbé Mauri.

Of those who avowedly espoused the cause of the Crown, the church and the peerage, the most conspicuous were Malouet, Clermont Tonnere, d'Esprémenil, once idolized, but now execrated by the mob, and chief of all, the Abbé Mauri. This ecclesiastic, whose conduct did no honour to his order, and whose known eagerness for personal advantages diminished the effect of all his efforts, was, in oratorical talent, the only adequate opponent of Mirabeau; but although his equal in eloquence, presence of mind and courage, his want of popularity rendered his opposition to the giant of faction laborious and disadvantageous.

Necker.

Among the ministers, no one stood conspicuous but Necker; and, by dexterous management, he appeared to be the idol of the people. Doubts of his political integrity have been raised; and if they were not well founded, they leave no description for his character but that of extreme weakness. If, as many believe, he meant to subvert the throne, his hypocrisy is of the most odious and contemptible description; if he did not, it is impossible to account for his conduct, but by ascribing it to a degree of vanity and self-confidence which counteracted all the dictates of common sense. On the day of the royal sitting, he displayed, in full, the qualities of his mind. The populace of Versailles, while insulting the royal family, and all who were supposed guilty of attachment to them, hailed him with cheers and acclamations, as their friend, their protector, their only safeguard, and they implored him not to leave them. "Be comforted, my children," he answered, "I remain near the King, I remain in the midst of you; only behave with mildness, conduct

“yourselves with moderation;” and in this way he was conducted to his hotel, after refusing his presence and support to his sovereign*.

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1789.

State of Paris.

Among the people, the ascendancy of faction was complete. In Paris, the gardens and coffee houses of the Palais Royal were constantly occupied by declaimers, who inveighed against the royal family and excited the fury of the people. Pamphlets most scurrilous and obscene were multiplied and distributed in all directions; and, not only in the capital, but in the provinces, political assemblies were formed, which, borrowing their name as well as their institution from England, were called clubs. Of these, the most celebrated was the club Breton, formed at first from the representatives of that part of France, but which, afterward, when its influence and connexions were much tended, and the place of its sittings changed to the hall of a suppressed monastery, governed all France and amazed all the world, under the name of the Jacobins. The members of these societies, and those who were attached to their principles, took, as usual, the privilege of dignifying themselves with a striking appellative; they were Patriots; those to whom they opposed themselves were devoted to contempt, hatred and destruction, under the title of Aristocrats; and the word *peuple*, which, in the French idiom, had been used only as synonymous with rabble, was, by the address of Sieyes and the energy of Mirabeau, accepted, as in English, to denote the whole community, the public. Thus was the power of legislation and government passing from the sovereign, and even the usurping assembly, into the hands of the clubs and the mobs of the Palais Royal; and they equally assumed that of punishing. Lists were prepared, published, augmented, and varied at pleasure, of persons who were to be sacrificed for the good of the people.

Clubs.

Jacobins.

Names assumed and given.

Power assumed by the factions.

Still all this appearance of strength was insufficient to inspire perfect confidence, if the army remained faithful. The gardes françoises, a body of

Seduction of the gardes françoises.

* Lacretelle, t. vi. p. 47.

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1789.

three thousand six hundred men, perfectly disciplined, and hitherto sincere in their attachment to the King, were stationed in Paris. Their excellent and noble-minded commander, Maréchal de Biron, had lately died, and the revolutionary party, by largesses and the seductions of pleasure, as well as by political lectures, had so alienated them from duty and discipline, that they had declared they would make common cause with the people, if necessary. Their commander thought fit to confine them, for several days, to their barracks; between two and three hundred of them broke the bonds of military subordination, and presented themselves among the mob at the Palais Royal. This was hailed as the assured prelude to a triumph, and these men were greeted as first legion of the tiers état! Prostitutes paraded the streets, leaning on their arms,—women of better condition rushed forward to embrace them, and money without limit was distributed among them. Eleven of these mutineers were sent, in custody, to the Abbaye St. Germain; but a body of many thousand insurgents dispersed the guard, broke open the prison, liberated the aggressors, and led them to the Palais Royal, where the night was spent in triumphant festivity.

On the following day, a deputation from the insurgents attended at the bar of the National Assembly, to petition for the pardon of the offenders. That body, which, since the day of the royal sitting, had shewn no signs of active encroachment on the Crown, now took the part assigned them, and addressed the King, in terms which might have passed for burlesque, praying him to use, for the re-establishment of order, those infallible means of clemency and kindness which were so natural to his heart, and that confidence in his people which they would always continue to deserve. The soldiers were remanded to prison, but liberated on the following day.

Every thing now demonstrated that the royal authority could only be maintained by a military body; but, were such a force assembled, it was obvious that its fidelity could not be relied on. An army, for so

Troops collected.

it might be termed, was collected, and placed under the command of the Maréchal de Broglie, who formed a staff, and assumed the manners, not of a commander only, but of a conqueror. The intent of these measures was variously considered. Some averred that they were calculated merely to support public order, and prevent the destruction of the royal authority, menaced by the violence of the mob and the defection of the military; others, that the resumption of despotic power was aimed at, and that, as a first step, the National Assembly was to be dissolved by force. Had this really been intended, it would have thrown unmitigated blame on Louis and those who advised him. He had sanctioned the proceedings of the tiers état by commanding the nobles to join them; and when he did so, he knew of the oath in the Tennis Court, that the assembly would never separate until they had framed a constitution. But there is no sufficient ground for considering this in any other light than a calumnious charge on which the leaders of the Assembly meant to found further proceedings and to excite fresh violence. They interrupted a metaphysical debate on the rights of man, to frame, on the motion of Mirabeau, a petition to the King for sending away the military. His answer was reserved and embarrassed; he had no objection, he said, to remove the troops to Compeigne; but then he should go there himself, and the Assembly must follow. This answer was received with much displeasure; Mirabeau proposed a protest, but the members declined any new remonstrances.

Necker, who could not conceal from himself that he was regarded with displeasure, who, since the royal sitting, had received no mark of royal confidence, now sought an interview with the King, and declared that if he could not disperse the clouds which obstructed all his endeavours for the public good, he must pray for leave to resign, and would quit the kingdom, that his presence might not form a pretext for a dreadful catastrophe. He received, shortly afterward, a note from Louis, claiming the performance of his promise,

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1789.

Proceedings in
the National
Assembly.

10th

Retreat of
Necker.

11th.

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1789.

12th
Its effect in
Paris .

The national
colours
established.

Conduct of
the Duke of
Orléans.

and desiring that no publicity might be given to his departure. The conduct of Necker, on this occasion, was admirable. The note was delivered to him in the midst of his friends; his countenance indicated no change in his condition or views; he spoke as if he intended on the morrow to resume some official business; but before night he departed, accompanied only by his lady, and reached Brussels without delay.

This event, when announced, threw all Paris into a flame. The Palais Royal resounded with cries of horror and alarm, with reports of threats against the people, and with imprecations against the court. A young hireling of the Duke of Orléans, named Camille Desmoulins, in the heat of a furious speech in the garden, tore down a bough from a tree, decorated his head with some of the foliage, proposing that a similar badge should be the distinction of the friends of liberty. The idea was eagerly caught, the garden was speedily stript of its verdure, and men, women, and even babes, were decorated with the emblem of insurrection. Whether by design or accident, it happened that the chosen colour, green, was that of the Orléans family. In the night the colour was discontinued, and mixture of red, blue, and white, since so tremendously celebrated, was adopted, and worn as a cockade by all who loved the popular cause or valued their personal safety.

Thus was the colour of the principal mover in the sedition thrown aside, merely because he had not the courage to appear and guide the storm. As a proof that he was wanted and expected, the mob, in their fury, rushed to a shop of wax-work in the Palais Royal, and finding images of the Duke and of Necker, covered them with crape, hoisted them aloft as ensigns, and carried them about in triumphant procession, with clamorous homage. Had the Duke been there in person, promising to protect the people and act by the advice of their favoured minister, his party would have been irresistible; but a wax-work image was not of sufficient influence to govern a nation; his colour was discarded, and his labours were far from the desired end.

In the course of their procession, the insurgents came in presence of a body of troops, and advanced boldly toward them, as if expecting their co-operation. Resistance was offered by the Baron de Besenval, their commander, and the Prince de Lambesc, Colonel of the Royal German regiment, conducted himself with much heat and indiscretion. He made a sort of charge of cavalry in the garden of the Tuilleries. An old man named Pepin, who was carrying one of the busts, was thrown down and severely hurt: murder! murder! revenge! revenge! became the cry. The military were pelted with stones, the streets were barricaded with waggons, carts, hackney coaches, every thing which could form an effectual obstruction, and the insurrection became general and formidable. Twelve hundred of the gardes françois, without officers, formed in line, and fired on the regiment of Lambesc. The night was spent in agitation, alarm, and terror, the barriers were burnt, violence extended on every side, and people who possessed any property secured themselves within their houses, appalled at the horrible looks of the wretches who swarmed in the streets, and made the air resound with cries of menace and denunciations of murder.

In this crisis, the National Assembly rather gave vigour to the insurgents than aid to government. They voted that Necker and Montmorin, De la Luzerne, and St. Priest, the ministers who had also been displaced, carried with them the esteem and regret of the Assembly and the nation; they sent a deputation to the King, pressing the removal of the soldiery from Versailles and from Paris, and the re-establishment of the city guards. Receiving a cold and guarded answer, they declared all civil and military agents in authority responsible for any attempts adverse to the national rights; and that ministers, of whatever rank, were amenable for all ills that had arisen or should arise from such attempts. These decrees afforded every encouragement to sedition, and were of truly ominous import to de Broglie, La Galaisère, Foulon, and La porte, who had received the vacated appointments.

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LXVI.

1789.

Conflict in
the garden of
the Tuil-
leries.

12th.
Conduct of
the Assembly.

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1789.

Foulon had rendered himself peculiarly unpopular, especially among the monied men, by expressing opinions which supposed a national bankruptcy; and against these the Assembly framed decrees, importing that the public debt was secured by the honour and integrity of the nation, of which no man had a right to entertain a doubt.

13th.
A govern-
ment formed
in Paris.

Arms
obtained.

National
guard.

In Paris, those who had before been terrified by the horrible bands which swarmed in the streets, now aided their enterprizes. They met at the Hotel-de-Ville, and formed arrangements for the civil and military, government of the city, without attempting to controul or even interfere with the proceedings of the mob. Arms were the great object; and, to obtain them, several depots were broken open and ransacked, particularly Saint Lazare, the Invalides, and the Garde-meuble de la Couronne. The town meeting, calling itself the Commune, formed a military body, in which every citizen was obliged to enrol himself, gave the command to the Marquis de la Salle, and he formed a staff, of confidential officers. Communication was regularly maintained between this new power and the Assembly, while all couriers from and to the Court were intercepted, and their dispatches suppressed.

14th.
Capture of
the Bastille.

An attack on the Bastille, the celebrated fortress and state prison, and the supposed deposit of a large quantity of arms and ammunition, had been loudly announced; and the governor, M. De Launay, who was utterly destitute of military stores and provisions, had made repeated applications on the subject, which were always neglected. De Launay was known to be a timid man, and, on that account perhaps, his requests were disregarded, although the importance of the fortress was highly impressed on the mind of government.

14th.

Early in the morning, a cry "to the Bastille! to the Bastille!" resounded in all parts of Paris; and the insurgents, proud of their numbers, secure of the assistance of the gardes françoises, and possessed of arms, which they thought would be irresistible, proceeded to the gate, and demanded admission. The Bastille was sufficiently strong to have repelled any at-

tack which was likely to be made; but the Governor, confused and terrified by imperious messages which were sent from the Commune, now demanding arms for the people, now insisting that the cannon, pointing toward the city, should be withdrawn, hesitated, evaded, and, by his air and manner, increased the confidence of the assailants. Thirty or forty armed men presented themselves as a deputation from the Commune; the Governor had the weakness to give them admittance by letting down a small drawbridge. While parleying with these, in the first court, other armed men gained the same spot, by the difficult and dangerous means of letting themselves down from the wall of an adjacent building, and endeavoured to cut the chain of the great drawbridge. The small bridge was immediately raised, a sound of firing was heard, and the mob without were exasperated to the highest pitch, believing that the party which had been admitted were entrapped and massacred. A general and vigorous attack was made; but, notwithstanding the number and the determination of the assailants, no impression had been effected, when suddenly the great drawbridge was let down, and afforded free admission. As the chain of this defence was not broken by shot, there could be no doubt that the point was gained through the treachery of some one of the defenders. The victors first attempted to burn a young woman, on the supposition that she was the Governor's daughter; and she was only rescued by the incredible exertions of M. De Montigny, her father, and a grenadier of the gardes françoises.

Fourscore invalids and thirty Swiss guards, who formed the whole garrison, kept up a brisk and destructive fire, and many of the besiegers fell, without making any considerable progress, when a company of the gardes françoises arrived, and took upon themselves the conduct of the attack. The Governor hung out a white flag, and by letter offered to surrender, if the lives of the garrison were spared; and they were allowed to march out with the honours of war. The military promised, on the honour of soldiers, that these condi-

tions should be complied with; but the mob renounced them; and while great parties spread through every chamber and vault of the fortress, others, in numbers not to be counted, began to butcher those who were helpless and in their power. De Launay, after undergoing all sorts of violence and indignity, was hanged on a lamp-iron. Stabbing, mutilation, and murder after the conflict had ceased, crowned the triumphs of the day.

Conquering the Bastille was viewed as a definitive victory over despotism. Liberty was the general cry; but, considering the transaction altogether, a most inauspicious foretaste was afforded of the liberty which had been acquired: bloody revenge and wanton assassination make a melancholy prelude to those scenes which are to complete the history of an emancipated and regenerated nation. It was expected that hundreds of prisoners were to be found, and marched in triumphant procession. The number liberated was only seven, and of them not one was confined as a prisoner of state*; a proof that, if the means of despotism remained, the disposition to use them had ceased to prevail. This event was considered as completing the French revolution, and it is usual to date its commencement from the day when it was consummated.

State of the
Court.

During these events, the National Assembly held a permanent sitting, and certain members received, almost every minute, advices from the capital. The Court, on the contrary, had no authentic communications; they could hear the cannon of the Bastille, but could not believe that a mob would make themselves masters of it; and the imperfect accounts which reached the royal presence, far from representing the true state of affairs, afforded matter for the burlesque humour of the courtiers. At length the veil was withdrawn. Confiding in the character of their coun-

* Four were imprisoned for forging bills of exchange and three were shut up by the request of their families, to restrain them from disgracing and ruining themselves; a course, which however justly it would be deprecated by those who are accustomed to the administration of English law, was deemed in France perfectly regular, and even useful and benevolent.

trymen, they could not believe that danger approached them; and, while they regarded with horror the revolutions of their own times in Russia, Denmark, and Sweden, could not forego the cherished illusions that the amenity of French manners and the indelible respect of the people for their superiors, and for their King, must be their guarantee against all danger*. In the Assembly, as events proceeded, motions and speeches of an alarming nature were made, until the Duke de La Rochefoucault Liancourt waited on the King with a full recital of the news, and an accurate description of the temper of the legislature.

Consternation and terror succeeded. The King, on the next day, about noon, repaired to the hall of the Assembly. He was preceded by no pompous display, nor was his intention known. He made a speech, replete with expressions of love for his people, with whom he declared himself to be identified, and of confidence in their representatives there assembled. He said he had given orders that the obnoxious troops should be withdrawn, and authorized, nay, invited, the deputies to communicate his sentiments to the capital. His speech was received with bursts of approbation; when he retired, the whole body respectfully attended him, and the Queen with the Dauphin, her second son, in her arms, greeted them from the balcony. A deputation was appointed to appease the people of Paris, and reconcile them with the King; but they carried with them no expression of the sense of the legislature on past transactions, no decree, no proclamation demanding respect for the laws: they were, in fact, missionaries sent to congratulate the conquerors of the Bastille. In that sense they were received; for, when M. Moreau de Saint Mery, addressing the Commune, represented how much the King had done in favour of liberty, he was cut short by screams and cries,—“We insist on seeing the King! let him come among us without guards, and give us the assurances he has given to the Assembly. Why

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1789.

15th.
The King
goes to the
Assembly.

Conduct of
that body.

16th.

* Memoires d'un Homme d'État, tom. i. p. 77.

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LXVI.1789.
Ministry
dismissed.

“are his odious ministers retained? Why have they
“not met the sentence their crimes have merited?”

Resistance to these demands was hopeless: the King dismissed his ministers, and announced the recall of M. Necker and his colleagues, and promised that he would immediately repair to Paris. The municipality appointed M. Bailly, a man learned, weak, and vain, their Mayor, and M. de Lafayette, who had been very quiet during the storm, General of the civic soldiery, now called the National Guard.

17th.
The King goes
to Paris.

Although apprized that danger threatened his life, the King fulfilled his promise; and his reception shewed, in a dreadful perspective, the expectations he had a right to form. Impressed with the communications he had received, Louis attended mass, received the sacrament, and transmitted a paper to his brother, appointing him regent in case of his death. His ministers were dismissed; and all the princes of the blood, except Monsieur his brother, with many nobles attached to the court, and therefore hated by the people, had emigrated, awed at the triumph and alarmed at the furious menaces of the populace. At eleven in the morning, he went into his carriage; almost all the members of the National Assembly, in their costume, proceeded with him on foot; and the common people of Versailles, their numbers being increased by labourers from the adjacent villages, armed with implements of husbandry and staves, incumbered the procession and augmented the disturbance. Four hundred gardes-du-corps marched first. Their progress was inevitably slow and disorderly; they did not arrive in Paris till seven o'clock; and the guards and attendants were prevented from entering the city, and compelled to wait on the outside until his return.

His reception.

By order of the new mayor and new commander of the soldiery, the cry of “Vive la nation” was substituted for the old exclamation, “Vive le Roi.” Bailly tendered the city keys to his Sovereign, with a speech of pedantic contumely. “These,” he said, “are the identical keys which were presented to Henry the Fourth when he had conquered his people; but, at

“ this day, the people have conquered their king.” Passing on, through two hundred thousand armed men, with three-coloured cockades, while he was accompanied only by his brother and five noblemen*, amidst menacing cries and interjections, and without a cheering exclamation from any of the people, the King exhibited no terror or disquiet. Nor was the danger confined to words: when the royal carriage arrived at the Champs Elysées, three muskets were heard, and a woman, close to the coach, was shot dead by a ball of extraordinary magnitude†; while the hat of a nobleman was also struck through by a bullet, although he sustained no personal injury‡. Thus was the King conducted to the Hotel de Ville, where he entered under what was called the arch of steel,—that is, bayonets and pikes crossed over his head; a symbol, it is said, invented by the secret societies. Bailly presented to him the three-coloured, now called national, cockade, accompanied with an expression which denoted that he thought it his only protection. The King, overpowered by the variety of sensations which this protracted torture created, answered only that his people might depend upon his love: M. De Lally, anxious to afford some relief, made a short speech, inviting them to swear that they would defend the King; all present declared that they swore it, and this terrible day at last drew to a conclusion.

In extenuation of the cruelties which followed the taking of the Bastille, it might be alleged, although not very correctly, that the people were exasperated by resistance, and carried beyond their natural bounds by the pressure of the moment. Events which soon occurred demonstrated that horrible murders, attended with savage aggravations, could be perpetrated with deliberation, and applauded where reprehension and restraint ought to have been expected. The unsparing rage of faction still produced lists of proscription, and the persons mentioned in them were not permitted to

More murders
committed.

* MM. De Beaucaire, De Villeroy, De Nesle, De Villequier, and D’Estaing.

† Named, Aimée Felicité du Prateau.

‡ Le Marquis de Corbière.

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LXVI.1789.
22nd.

believe them inefficient menaces. M. Foulon, a man seventy-four years old, was dragged to Paris as a prisoner, with his hands tied behind him, a crown of nettles on his head, and his mouth stuffed with hay. The mob forced the Hotel de Ville, and, in spite of the remonstrances of Bailly and Lafayette, suspended him to the lamp iron; the rope broke twice, but still the murderers persevered; and, after they had executed him, fixed his head on a pike, and paraded it through the streets. In their procession, they discovered his son-in law, M. Berthier de Sauvigny, and siezed him as an additional victim. Young and in full health, he made a valiant resistance; to avoid the disgrace of the rope, he assailed the whole mob with a musket, wrenched from the hand of a national guard, and fell covered with unnumbered bayonet wounds. One of his military murderers ripped open his body, and tore out his palpitating heart; and his head, placed on a pike, was paraded with that of his father-in-law.

In the provinces.

Nor were these scenes confined to the capital. The provinces, where it might be presumed that vice and corruption had made less progress, produced their full share. Emissaries from Paris spread alarming reports of meditated mischief: the crops were to be destroyed before harvest, and violence and massacre were to be perpetrated in all parts. The military in garrison towns generally renounced the law of discipline; the mob took upon themselves the work of blood and destruction. In provinces far distant from each other, in Guyenne, Alsace, Provence, Franche-Comté, Normandy, Burgundy, the same means were pursued, with so much similarity of particulars as to leave no doubt that a general instruction pervaded all the insurgent bodies. It were tedious and nauseous to recite the circumstances of savageness by which the acts of carnage were characterized; but it is worthy of remark, that the incendiaries uniformly destroyed the title deeds of those whose houses they plundered, and applied horrible tortures to make the proprietors discover and surrender them.

Indifference of
the Assembly.

In the Assembly no effective measures were taken

to restrain these excesses. The members occupied themselves in abstract discussions on the rights of man, or the formation of committees for purposes of remote or undefined legislation. They professed to be arranging the principles of a constitution, which should be the glory of their country, and a model for all mankind; but when M. Lally depicted the horrors he had witnessed, and required the intervention of the Assembly, Robespierre met the demand with a canting apostrophe on the ills which the people had suffered from despotism during two centuries; and Barnave asked, with a sneer, if the blood which had been shed was so very pure? At last, they issued, not a law, but a proclamation, not commanding, but inviting the people to keep the peace, and, with respect to the murder of Foulon and Berthier, they passed to the order of the day.

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1789.

23rd.

M. Necker was recalled, the National Assembly having addressed the Crown to re-instate him. His passage to Versailles and the capital was a triumph; troops of military attended him; the legislature received him with acclamations and complimentary speeches; Bailly was profuse in commendations and professions of regard; the mob insisted on seeing their benefactor, and celebrated his return with illuminations and bonfires. He addressed them in a long speech, deprecating all tumultuary and illegal proceedings, and praying the release of the Baron de Besenval, commandant of the Swiss guards, who had been imprisoned, and whose life was menaced by the new distributors of vengeance. The Communes, influenced by Bailly, decreed accordingly, and Necker departed, thinking himself firmly established in popular favour, and substantially the head of a party in the state, when, in fact, his name was a mere word used by a faction to distress the court, while his person and merits were entirely indifferent to them. His reputation, such as it was, gave distaste to the faction which sought to govern; his ruin was resolved on, and the compliment of the day was the last mark of popular favour which awaited him. The district assemblies, of which there

Necker's
triumph.

29th
30th.

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LXVI.

1789.

31st.

Observations.

The legisla-
tive body.

The King.

were sixty in Paris, were convened that very night, and, under the influence of the Orléans party, the greater portion of them censured and annulled the decree for liberating the Baron de Besenval. In the Assembly, Mirabeau blamed the Commune for arrogating to itself the right of granting pardons and mitigating the severity of the law, and, amidst censures of the minister himself, for seeking this triumph in an indirect way, instead of preferring his request to the Assembly or to the Crown; the decree of the Parisian legislature was declared void*.

It is impossible to reconsider this long, though abridged, detail of the greatest event of modern history, without feeling how much all parties erred from the line of propriety. The vices of the popular agitators, and the crimes to which they gave birth, appear in every period of the narrative. The faulty formation and factious disposition of the legislative body are equally obvious. The vanity, egotism, and self-sufficiency of Necker are not less striking; but the enumeration of errors does not terminate there. The conduct of the King, steadied by no fixed principle, but wavering from side to side, with perpetual self-contradiction, gave every advantage to his enemies, and made it impossible that he should be effectually served by his friends. If he meant to yield to popular clamours, he acted unwisely in displaying, on so many occasions, the forms of ancient authority; the beds of justice, the royal sittings, the enforced registration of decrees, and the exile of magistracies, should never have been undertaken but by a monarch whose vigour of mind and amplitude of resources gave prospect of maintaining with firmness the prerogatives thus asserted. Still more, if he was determined that blood should not be shed in his quarrel, the collection of a military force near the capital and the seat of legislation was an act of consummate indiscretion. A military array should never be displayed, but when there is a determination

* After this event, the Baron de Besenval was detained six months in prison, tried before the Court of the Chatelet, and, to the inexpressible mortification of the Orléans faction, acquitted. He died soon afterward.

to use it with vigour, if necessary ; but the precise urgency of that necessity should be calculated, the mode of employing the force predetermined, and nothing left to accident or sudden impulse. Yet Louis was, in every respect, more sinned against than sinning. His advisers, availing themselves of the flexibility of his character, put in force their separate notions of government, during the alarming crisis into which the nation was thrown, but did not stand forward to make a party in his favour, and finally deserted him, when encompassed with danger on every side. The emigration was a most distressing calamity. Had the princes and nobles remained, they might, each in his several spot, by an exercise of influence, or by pecuniary means, have obtained succour and support to the cause of government ; or, if they had united in any certain place, they might have defended each other, and formed a centre, around which the well-affected might have rallied ; but, while they persisted in thinking that by absenting themselves they avenged their injuries, while, with ostentatious affectation, they publicly ordered their carriages to be driven beyond the frontier, they not only injured and weakened their own cause, but threw suspicion around the conduct and intentions of the royal family. One striking distinction, however, should not be forgotten. Crimes were committed only by those who arrogated the name of patriots : they pillaged, they burned, they murdered ; but the hand of the plunderer was never enriched, nor the blade of the assassin ever discoloured, by the instigation of the Crown or any of its supporters.

If, in the National Assembly, no regulations, tending to the establishment of social order, the protection of life and property, or the restraint and punishment of crime, were proposed, measures of destruction were cherished, and even proclaimed : the change of denominations and of proprietorships was acknowledged as a principle, without which a solid reform could not be effected. All territorial tenures were called feudal ; and the feudal system being, by a definition equally incorrect, stigmatized as one of tyrants and of slaves, it

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LXVI.

1789.

The nobility.

Emigration.

Progress of the
National
Assembly.

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1789.

August 4.
Overthrow of
privileges.

followed, not only that it must cease, but that, as far as possible, all traces of its existence should be obliterated. That these changes would affect the clergy, the nobility, and the throne, was neither deprecated nor disguised; and hence it was that the mobs who ravaged the country were instructed to seek for and destroy family muniments.

The meetings of the Assembly were held twice a day, and the evening sitting was always expected to produce strong motions and violent harangues. On one of these evenings, the aspect of the deputies, the general feeling they evinced, and probably some intimations which escaped, gave reason to anticipate an extraordinary scene; but that which actually did take place exceeded all possible expectation. The sitting commenced at eight o'clock. A report from a committee had been presented on the preceding day, which stated that letters and memorials were received from the provinces, proving that all kinds of property were every where the prey of atrocious plunderers; houses were burnt, convents destroyed, and farms given up to pillage. "Imposts, seigneurial services, all," the reporter added, "all is annihilated; the laws are "without force, the magistrates without authority, and "justice is no longer any thing but a phantom, which "it is vain to seek in the courts." As a remedy to all these disorders, the committee proposed a declaration which was not satisfactory to the Assembly; but, after much debate, they adopted its principal points, and ordered a new one to be drawn up and presented the next day at the evening sitting. The new plan of a declaration referred to the ancient laws, impost, duties and rents, as still subsisting and to be adhered to, until the authority of the nation should have abrogated or modified them. All rose to resist a declaration so moderate and just. The Viscount de Noailles stated the claims of the people, and moved that all those claims should be granted before any declaration should be adopted. It was time that the last groans of feudalism should be heard. A contest of concessions immediately commenced; members of every privileged

class striving who should appear most ready to offer the sacrifice of their particular privileges and the order of things from which they emanated. The feudal rights were distinguished into real and personal. The latter, and those which had formerly been personal, but had been redeemed for a rent in corn or money, were abolished without compensation. All the real rights were declared redeemable, and also the rights of mortmain, courts-baron, and impropriations: all seigniorial jurisdictions, exclusive right of game and warrens, were suppressed. A member of the nobility then rose, and said with emotion, "Catullus had but one bird, and he could do no more than offer his bird: so it is with me; I have nothing else, and I give it up; as pigeons are hurtful to agriculture, they ought to be destroyed." The motion, allowing all men to kill pigeons, passed unanimously. It was followed by a decree, without the slightest opposition, for the equality of taxes, according to the abilities of those who paid them, the gratuitous administration of justice, the abolition of the sale of places, and of all pecuniary privileges and exemptions, the reform of franchises and peculiar jurisdictions, and for the free admission of every citizen to ecclesiastical, civil, and military employments, without distinction of birth. The particular privileges of provinces and towns were also given up by their respective deputies; and those who were restrained by the strictness of their instructions, said, they would write to their constituents to solicit their consent. Provence was the only exception. The clergy made sacrifices equally indiscriminate. Pluralities were forbidden; first fruits and the rights to the profits during vacancies were suppressed: parish priests gave up their surplice fees; and it was instantly decreed, that they should be indemnified by an increase of salary, affording them a competent provision, like the priests in towns. It was lastly decreed, that ecclesiastical tithes should be abolished, and a modus allowed. It was also resolved that all pensions granted by the Crown should be submitted to examination,

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that the Assembly might suppress or reduce them according to their discretion. On the motion of the Archbishop of Paris, a *Te Deum* was ordered to be sung in the King's chapel, in presence of his Majesty and the members of the Assembly. Louis the Sixteenth was to be proclaimed the restorer of French liberty; a medal to be struck in commemoration of these glorious events; and at day-break they adjourned*.

If some persons viewed these events with terror, and saw with deep emotions of regret how much of the ancient structure of the state was destroyed by the rashness of a few men in a few hours, they met with little sympathy from those who guided and who acted in the passing scenes. The mere vulgar destroyers enjoyed with rapture so much and such hasty demolition; they fancied some good might accrue to them; and they knew that much evil must result to those whom they had been taught to envy and to hate. They whose projects were deeper and more extensive, saw with transport the abolition of those privileges which were so essential to the support of the throne, and the invasion of property of which they had determined to make a prey. When all these decrees were to be reduced to a formal act, many deputies endeavoured to modify the concessions they had made; but the words of the decrees were too strong and plain to admit of any qualification, although many were extended far beyond the original import. Thus, not only the rights which had been surrendered were suppressed, but the whole feudal system, all rights of paramount seignory, precarious feuds, relicts, fealty, and all other claims and incidents, were annihilated without compensation. Tithes underwent the same fate; Sieyes opposed, but Mirabeau supported, the spoliation: the mob clamoured, the public orators declaimed, and the enemies of honesty and religion obtained a complete victory.

8th.

13th.

* The matter of this narrative is supplied by all the histories, journals, and periodical works of the time: the authority most closely followed is Bertrand de Moleville. *Annals*, vol. i. p. 390.

During these debates, the whole body of ministers, by command of the King, attended the Assembly, to repose in its bosom the anxieties with which his heart was agitated. The Archbishop of Bordeaux depicted with truth and energy the deplorable state to which the country was reduced, the unbridled licentiousness of the times, the laws without force, the forms of justice neglected, and violence and arbitrary proscriptions substituted; property invaded in all the provinces, incendiaries ravaging private habitations, the asylums of piety violated, industry and commerce suspended, terror and desolation spread throughout the kingdom. To this picture, M. Necker, who spoke next, added that of an empty treasury, occasioned by the delay in payment of the taxes, by the pillage of the offices, by the dispersion of the registers, and by smuggling, which was carried on with open force in several provinces. He demonstrated the necessity of immediately negotiating a loan, to supply unavoidable expenses, and the most pressing wants, only for two months, which he stated to be sufficient time for the Assembly "to have finished, or at least to have considerably advanced, the great labours in which they were engaged." He did not deny that, amid so much commotion, the success of this loan "was very uncertain, notwithstanding the generous and patriotic sentiments which ought to support it." The amount required by the minister was only thirty millions (£1,250,000), for which an interest of five per cent. was to be given, and times fixed for paying up the subscriptions. The legislature reduced the interest to four and a half per cent. and allowed no time: the consequence was, that the loan utterly failed, and the distress of the treasury became greater than ever. As this sum could not be obtained, a new plan was proposed, allowing the advantages to lenders which Necker's knowledge of business had first led him to offer: the sum was now eighty millions (£3,333,333); but, when public credit is once tarnished, its brilliancy cannot easily be restored. The loan never filled to the amount of three millions; and to prop public

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1789.

7th.
Remonstrance
to the Assembly.

A loan attempted.

27th.

Plate melted.

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LXVI.

1789.

Patriotic gifts.

Allowance to
members.

12th.

Sept. 9th.

Declaration of
the rights of
man.

credit, and give an appearance of funds, the plate belonging to the King and to the church was sent to the mint, and patriotic donations were thankfully received. The first expedient caused a great destruction, with little profit: a vase of exquisite workmanship, or a fillagree shrine, which would be estimated at very large sums, produced, when cast into the melting pot, a miserable return in crown pieces. The gifts were ludicrous: shoe-buckles and knee-buckles, spoons and porringers, the ornaments of women's dress, and even the toys of babes, were presented with great ostentation, and received by the Assembly with honours and with thanks. In the midst of all this public distress, the legislators did not forget their own interest. They voted to each of themselves eighteen francs (15s.) a day, a sum which, if their number of twelve hundred were full, would amount to seven millions eight hundred and eighty-four thousand livres (£328,500) a year; or, at all events, would give to each deputy who would claim it an annuity of six thousand five hundred and seventy livres nearly (£274). This revenue was the more certain, as the Assembly soon decreed themselves permanent, and did not except the sabbath from their days of transacting business.

Beside these financial discussions, treatises on the first principles of government engaged the attention of the Assembly, and, after many laborious efforts, a committee presented a string of adages, termed a declaration of the rights of man. On this great production, which was to form the basis of a constitution, several wearisome weeks had been spent in puerile verbal criticisms, and in hearing speeches which seemed like the essays of the junior students in a college, when a committee of five members, Mirabeau being one, was charged with the arrangement of this gospel of liberty*. This composition was received

* The members of the Committee were Mirabeau, Durouverai, Clavière, Mounier, and Dumont. The last member wrote an account of their proceedings. "We went on," he says, "framing, cavilling, adding one word and erasing four, exhausting ourselves on this absurd undertaking, and producing at last our piece of patchwork, our mosaic composition of pretended natural rights, which never had existed."—Dumont; *Mémoires sur Mirabeau*, p. 97.

with tumultuous applause, as if, by magical influence, it could dissipate every evil, and render the whole nation rich, wise, and happy. The several articles were debated; but the few voices that were raised against them were over-ruled, and, under the clamorous dictation of the mob, they all passed into decrees. Some steps had been taken toward fixing the portion of authority and power to be confided to the King. It had been declared a fundamental law of the realm, that his person was sacred and inviolable, the crown hereditary in the male line, and the kingdom indivisible; but, with respect to the making of laws, it was not yet settled whether or not the sovereign was to have the power of suspending or prohibiting their operation, or whether the Assembly, which had now decreed that the legislature should consist of one body only, should be endowed with summary omnipotence, in making decrees which could neither be reversed nor delayed. The King, having hesitated to sanction the acts of the fourth of August, and paused on the declaration of the rights of man, the debates on his authority were conducted with great asperity; the Assembly refused to permit the reading of a memorial from him, until the question should have been settled. It was, at length, allowed that he should have what was called a suspensive, but not an absolute, veto; to last during the existence of two legislatures; but then the decrees, if not rescinded, were to pass as laws. This concession was afterward of little avail to the King; but the term *veto*, being converted into a nick-name, was used with most malignant effect against him and the Queen.

Aug 15.

The King delays his sanction.

Sep 11th.

Confusion and misrule increased on all sides. The Assembly had decreed liberty of religious opinions and of the press. Religious liberty was, in consequence, enjoyed by all but Christians: they were the objects of public contempt and hatred; so much, that men and women going to mass were beaten and maltreated, with circumstances of great indecency. The press increasing in licentiousness, libels and provocations to rebellion, plunder, and murder were daily vented in papers published by such men as Carra,

Aug. 22, 24.
Persecution of religion.

Licentiousness of the press.

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LXVI.1789.
Violence of
mobs.

Gorsas, and Marat. The assemblages at the Palais Royal increased in frequency and violence: they were led and inspired by adventurers of the basest description; authors without reputation, advocates without clients, and daring outcasts, who, without disguise, instigated massacre and plunder. In these meetings were heard the stentorian voices of Saint Huruge and Danton, and the atrocious ribaldries of Camille Desmoulins, who had taken the inauspicious title of Attorney-general to the lamp-iron. Foreigners of a degraded class were allowed to figure in the scenes: Gusman, a Spanish adventurer; Proli and Pereira, two Flemings; and a creature so extravagant that he might pass for a madman, but that the well-arranged malignity of his efforts deprived him of that plea. His name was Cloutz, by birth a Prussian; he had discarded his baptismal name Jean Baptiste, to assume that of Anacharsis; for a title, he took Val de Grace; and as a designation of his political and religious opinions, he called himself the orator of the human race, and the personal enemy of Jesus Christ. To the acts and incitements of these leaders, and their desperate adherents, the Assembly opposed only vague and general decrees. They could denounce by name the friends, adherents, and advisers of the Crown; but the acts of these instigators of crime were encouraged, rather than obstructed by proclamations in favour of liberty and peace, and decrees that property should be protected.

Scarcity of
bread.

Famine in Paris was felt as a dreadful calamity. As a plenteous harvest had recently been secured, people expected that abundance should immediately visit the capital. The legislature answered petitions and representations by a decree that grain should circulate freely; but they took no measures to obtain supplies. The mob plundered the shops of bakers, and hung the owners, if suspected of hoarding grain; but still relief was not obtained. The charge of monopoly and forestalling, raised on this, as on similar occasions in all countries, was directed against the friends of the King, and passions were inflamed to the most dangerous pitch.

An opportunity was at length found for giving vent to these bad feelings in a tremendous explosion. Repeated threats of an attack on the palace having been made, the municipality of Versailles represented that the three or four hundred gardes-du-corps stationed there were insufficient for its defence; and the regiment of Flanders was marched into the town, and received by the magistrates, who administered to them the civic oath. A dinner of welcome was, according to military custom, given to the new-comers, first by the national guard of Versailles, and next, with somewhat more ceremony, by the officers of the gardes-du-corps. It took place at the opera house: the boxes were filled with well-dressed spectators; the company were placed at a table in the form of a horse-shoe; and among them were the Count D'Estaing, commandant of the national guard, and twenty of his officers. The healths of the King, Queen, and Dauphin, were given, and "Vive le Roi" resounded from every part. The band played the favourite air of "O Richard, O mon Roi!" from the opera of *Cœur de Lion*. The soldiers leaped from the pit to the stage, and again drank the healths: the nation was proposed as a toast, and, considering the state of the public feeling, very indiscreetly rejected. At the request of the party, communicated by several deputations, the Royal Family appeared, at the close of the second course, and walked round the table, the Dauphin being carried in the arms of a garde-du-corps, who also led the Princess, his sister, by the hand. Their presence renewed the demonstrations of loyalty; their health, with wishes for their welfare, were repeated as a toast with enthusiasm; and on their retiring, the troops of the line and the national guards mixed indiscriminately in a joyous dance. The next day, a cheerful party assembled and drank out the wine which was left; and two thousand crowns (£250) were subscribed, and sent to the curés to be distributed among the poor.

This really unimportant occurrence was tortured by the aid of exaggeration and falsehood into a plot to carry off the King, to seduce the national guards,

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LXVI.

1789.

October.
The regiment
of Flanders
sent to Ver-
sailles.

Dinners given.

2nd.

Anger excited.

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LXVI.

1789.

Misrepresentations.

4th.
Consequent
proceedings.Insurrection in
Paris.

and to re-establish despotic authority. It was untruly affirmed that the national cockade was trampled under foot; that court ladies distributed white ones among the military; and the contrivance and guilt of the whole transaction were imputed to the Queen*.

This feast, it is to be observed, took place at Versailles, where the Assembly was sitting; and, although it was made a theme in the clubs, the public meetings, and the taverns in Paris, the same night, yet it was not so much as mentioned in the legislature until three days had elapsed. In a debate on the King's delay in approving the declaration of the rights of man, Mirabeau moved for a deputation to inform him that his complete, absolute, and immediate sanction must be given. The orgie at the palace was then mentioned, and Petion, in a confused speech, in the course of which he was repeatedly contradicted in direct terms, related the Paris fable on the subject. "Explain, sir," exclaimed the royalists; "declare distinctly the great crimes by which the Assembly is threatened, and name those whom you mean to brand with guilt." The feeble Petion was relieved by Mirabeau, who exclaimed that he was ready to do it, provided the Assembly would declare that no person, except the King, could enjoy the privilege of inviolability; and, that his meaning might be understood by all, he muttered the names of the Queen and the Duke de Guiche†.

Favoured by these circumstances, and encouraged by the famine in Paris, which, if severely felt, was also

* See an account of this day depicted with the utmost malignity, *History of the Revolution in France* by Rabaut (de St. Etienne), p. 148. Many other writers have given similar accounts. But see the deposition of Elie Joseph de Miomandre de Chateauneuf, *Procédure au Chatelet, troisième partie*, p. 40.

† In the narrative of these proceedings, I have generally followed Lacretelle, vol. vii. p. 184, et seq. but I have consulted all the other authorities. Lecointre of Versailles, afterwards a deputy to the Convention, was a principal fabricator of the scandalous narrative. This man, when called as a witness on the trial of the Queen, did not depose half of the facts which were currently believed at the time; and there is every reason to consider his evidence as untrue. Two persons whom he alluded to by name, as having been present, were called as witnesses (Percival and d'Estaing). Percival flatly contradicted the assertions of Lecointre, who, in his explanation, equivocated and referred to hearsay; and d'Estaing was only slightly examined. No such fact as cursing the Assembly, trampling on the national cockade, or assuming any other, was advanced. See *Procès des Bourbons*, vol. iii. pp. 21, 64, 72.

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greatly exaggerated, a new insurrection was arranged with much skill and cunning. On a Monday morning, at peep of day, a woman passed through the streets, beating a drum, and proclaiming that there was no bread in the bakers' shops. A band of females soon collected, and a countless mob covered the Place-de-Greve, clamouring for bread, and attempting to hang a baker. A few horse-guards and a small body of foot soldiers made an ineffectual resistance; for, as the soldiers would not charge bayonets on the women, who were purposely placed in front, the men, who were stationed behind, put them to flight by showers of stones. They broke into the Hotel de Ville, and, forcing the doors of the armoury, seized all the muskets and two pieces of cannon. With yells and execrations, they declared the whole municipality, with Bailly and Lafayette at their head, traitors, worthy of the lamp-iron, and raised a cry, "To Versailles! to Versailles!" that they might in person petition the Assembly for food. About six thousand women, of the lowest description, in rags, drunk, and breathing nothing but curses and threats, assembled at the Champs Elysées; they were armed with clubs, pitchforks, pikes, muskets, and pistols, and threatened to attack the arsenal for ammunition, but were persuaded to desist, and even to forego the arms they had. They set out for Versailles, preceded by eight or ten drums and a company of the volunteers of the Bastille, and attended by an immense concourse of squalid and ferocious men, from the manufactories in the faux-bourgs, who were not unarmed. Their shouts, songs, and cries were appalling: threats of murder were uttered against the Queen and the Court; and their favourite songs devoted all aristocrats to the lamp-iron, and accused the Queen of plotting the assassination of all the inhabitants of the capital*.

* The favourite song of the times, called "Ca ira," set to a pretty, lively tune, fit for a quick march, or a country dance, sentences "tous les aristocrates à la lanterne," while another, produced about the same time, called the "Car-magnole," began

"Madame Veto avoit promis
"De faire égorger tout Paris."

With such invocations, so direct in their incitement, and so truculent in their import, in the mouths, not of the mob alone, but legislators, public functionaries, and

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During these transactions, and for several hours, the tocsin or alarm bell had been ringing. The Council of the Commune was sitting, and Lafayette was near them; but neither advice nor action was the consequence. At length, the General was aroused by a deputation from the grenadiers of the national guard, who, paying him the cold compliment that they did not believe him to be a traitor, said the government was betraying the nation. "The people are wretched," they exclaimed; "and the source of the evil is at Versailles. We will go and bring the King to Paris, and exterminate the regiment of Flanders and the gardes-du-corps, who have dared to trample on the national cockade." Lafayette and Bailly remonstrated in vain. Their voices were drowned in an imperious clamour, "To Versailles! to Versailles!" and at length a written order was given to the General to obey his troops; and four commissioners were appointed to attend him. He took, as an advanced guard, three companies of grenadiers and one of fusileers, with field pieces; and there were seven or eight hundred men armed with muskets and pikes; they had also artillery and baggage waggons. What they were to do, they knew not; probably the General himself had never thought on the matter.

Proceedings at
Versailles.

On that morning, the King had gone to Meudon, to enjoy the sports of the field. The alarming intelligence being conveyed to him about one o'clock, he expressed his wishes that the supply of grain depended on him, his people should never have wanted; disclaimed all sensation of fear, and expressly commanded that the gardes-du-corps should not use their arms.

Arrival of the
mob.

About three o'clock, the first body of females made their appearance, led by one Stanislaus Maillard, who, with a deputation of fifteen women, was admitted. He demanded bread, of which he said there had been none for three days, and the punishment of the gardes-du-corps, who had insulted the national cockade. The

military commanders, does it not seem monstrous that so much indignation should be expressed because the supposed song of the troubadour Blondel, which had been five or six years on the stage, should be sung in a moment of conviviality at a military dinner?

aristocrats, he said, had bribed the millers not to grind corn, and he had taken a black cockade from one of these aristocrats. After a very little interrogation, the falsehood of his assertions became evident, and he began to own himself satisfied, when a large body of women burst into the hall, screaming for bread, for the dismissal of the regiment de Flandres, and the punishment of the gardes-du-corps, and howling execrations against the Queen. To the august and passive representatives of the people, they behaved with insolent familiarity and imperious contumacy, commanding some to speak, and others to hold their tongues, as suited their caprice.

A deputation, headed by the President, was appointed to wait on the King, to represent the state of the capital; the women, on the outside, insisted on accompanying them; but, after much trouble, six were agreed to, and twelve went. They soon returned, proclaiming with joy his benevolent expressions; but their comrades swore they had been bribed, and two of them were only rescued from execution by the gardes-du-corps. They were again admitted, and obtained from the King a written declaration that he would cause supplies to be sent from Senlis and Lagny, and that all obstacles to the victualling of the capital should be removed. It was obvious that, in effect, this promise was of no value, but as an expression of kindness and good-will. Situated as he was, the King could no more command the grain in France, than that in Germany or America; he could neither interpose nor remove an obstruction; but it perfectly dispelled the illusion that he voluntarily occasioned the public distress; and Maillard, with forty of the women, returned to Paris in carriages, to communicate the joyous intelligence. Another delusion was removed by seeing the gardes-du-corps: they had not a black cockade among them; no public order had commanded the use of the three-coloured, and they continued the white, their accustomed and regulated uniform.

Deputation to
the King.

Still the mob was unappeased; being joined by the populace, and even the national guard of Ver-

Further pro-
ceeding of the
mob.

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sailles, they tried to irritate the soldiery by outrageous abuse, and at length assailed them with stones and missiles, and even wounded one with a musket shot. Under all these provocations, the military made no attack, but, at last, shifted their ground just in time to avoid a general discharge of musketry and grape which was prepared for them. In all this transaction, the irresolution of the King, or rather his unwarrantably forbearing to direct rightly the force in his hands, was his bane. One charge of cavalry would have altered the whole aspect of affairs, and changed the clamours of unbridled insolence, and the shouts of unresisted triumph to tones of supplication and murmurs of despair.

The King
forced to assent
to the declara-
tion of the
rights of man.

The deputation from the Assembly, feeling that the time was improper, did not, as they were instructed, require from the King a pure and unqualified recognition of their declaration of the rights of man; but the majority of the body, restrained by no such delicacy, ordered their immediate return; and, amidst the yells and threats of a drunken and blood-thirsty rabble, the King was forced to give his free and full assent.

Arrival of La-
fayette.

Scenes of an atrocious and disgusting description continued until the arrival of Lafayette, at a late hour. On approaching the hall of the Assembly, he made his troops again go through the unavailing ceremony of swearing fidelity to the nation, the law, and the King. Entering the hall, he found very few deputies, the greater number having retired for the night, and a large assemblage of the Paris mob, sitting intermixed with those who remained, eating and drinking. Confiding, with characteristic vanity and folly, in his own influence, he assured the President of perfect tranquillity and safety. He then repaired to the King, and, after a short interview, returned and dismissed the faithful gardes-du-corps, placing in their stead the gardes françaises, of whose disloyalty and treachery he could not be ignorant. The regiment de Flandres was no longer to be trusted; a troop of Parisian women, headed by Theroigne de Mericourt, an Amazonian prostitute, had openly gone into the ranks and

His proceed-
ings.

bribed them all. The gardes françoises, resuming the posts they had occupied before their defection, insisted also that the gate to the Prince's court should be opened; a measure most dangerous to the royal family, but which was permitted, on the assurances of Lafayette, that by assenting to the declaration of the rights of man and the constitutional articles, and by permitting the former French guards to return to their old posts, his Majesty had allayed the fermentation; that the people were tranquil; and that Versailles would be cleared by break of day. "I beseech your Majesty," he added, "to go to bed, and to repose fully on my care; I will be answerable for all."

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And assurances.

Believing, or not shewing any disbelief, in these assurances, the King and Queen retired to their apartments at two o'clock; the troops on whom they could rely were withdrawn to Trianon, except about eighty or a hundred gardes-du-corps, who remained in the palace. The mob, rendered additionally ferocious by wine, and increased rather than diminished in numbers, continued around the palace, screaming, vociferating, cursing, and threatening. Some were in the Place d'Armes, and the avenue to Paris, where great fires were lighted, around which they sat, eating and drinking; some took shelter in the guard-house, while others crowded the hall of the Assembly, where, amidst insolent interruptions, a debate on the criminal law was continued, until four o'clock, when they broke up; but it was observed, that a few members, among whom were Barnave, Mirabeau, and Petion, remained in the hall all night. In this state of things, and having left for protection of the royal family no greater number of the gardes françoises than had been usual in the most tranquil moments, Lafayette, either through stupidity or treachery, retired to his bed.

6th.
State of the
mob.

Favoured thus by purposed or accidental opportunity, restrained by no fear of control or opposition, the mob clustered at day-break, between five and six o'clock, about the iron-gate of the Prince's court; it was treacherously opened. At first, a small number entered; but when the crowd increased, both in num-

They break
into the palace.

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ber and violence, the commanding officer marched the gardes-du-corps to their place of duty in the palace. The mob attempted to fire upon them ; but, fortunately, the priming of their pieces had been spoiled by the rain. The order to these brave and dutiful men not to use their arms was repeated by the major, and they promised obedience, declaring, at the same time, that they expected to be murdered.

Two columns of assassins rushed in different directions ; the one toward the Queen's apartments, who would certainly have been their victim, but for the courageous devotion of the gardes-du-corps. These brave men, whose whole number did not exceed a hundred, contested every step with the murderers, by barricading doors, and opposing personal strength where they had no other resource. Two were savagely murdered ; others were rescued from the same fate by their own strenuous efforts and the intervention of some of the grenadiers ; but at length an explanation on the subject of cockades took place, and further projects of assassination were given up.

Lafayette
asleep.

But where was Lafayette all this while ?—fast asleep. —No aid-de-camp, no stationed officer ;—no trusty friend had disturbed his tranquil slumber. When he went to bed, he knew the state in which matters were ; —his experience before he left Paris had informed him of the quality and disposition of the party he followed to Versailles ; but he took no more measures of precaution than he would in times of profound tranquillity. At length he appeared on horseback, when the heat of violence had subsided.

Escape of the
Queen.

The Queen escaped by a private passage into the chamber of the King, and was joined by her children. The murderers, when they had broken into her chamber, gratified their vengeful passion by stabbing her bed and pillows, and their predatory inclination by stealing whatever property they could convey away.

The royal
family forced
to go to Paris.

In hopes, probably, of reviving the fury which seemed in some degree tranquillized, the mob demanded the appearance of the Queen. She, whose courage during the whole of these dreadful scenes had

risen to a pitch of exalted heroism, obeyed the summons without hesitation, holding her children, one in each hand. This pathetic, though silent appeal, increased the rage, as it augmented the disappointment of her enemies: "no children! no children!" they exclaimed. The intrepid Princess retired for a moment and returned unaccompanied; this act of heroism operated electrically; *vive la reine!* burst from every mouth. A cry was then raised "to Paris! the King "to Paris!" This audacious attempt on the liberty of the monarch surpassed expectation; Lafayette and his corps were silent and amazed, the friends of the King stupified; while the clamour increased, and the demand was vociferously repeated. Two members of the National Assembly being near, the King desired them to inform the President of his situation, and request the aid and council of the legislative body, and that they would immediately come and hold their sitting in the hall of Hercules. Mounier would have complied, but was opposed by Mirabeau, who said, the President could not compel them to go without deliberation; and, in discussing the question, observed that "it was unbecoming their dignity, and even unwise, to accede to the invitation; that freedom of debate would be lost in a royal palace, and that it would be enough to send a deputation of six-and-thirty members to advise with the King;"—and his proposition was adopted by a majority. When Louis was informed of these facts, and the danger of trusting himself to a licentious and sanguinary multitude was strongly represented to him, he answered, that he would not permit any more blood to be shed in his quarrel, but would go. This intelligence was communicated to the mob, and received with demonstrations of satisfaction. The Assembly immediately decreed that they were inseparable from the person of the King; a deputation of one hundred should attend him to the capital.

The Royal Family departed at one o'clock, in melancholy procession. At the head of it was a wretch, known, from his disguise, as the man with the great beard, who, after displaying ferocious atrocity in mur-

Their progress.

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dering the gardes-du-corps, had smeared himself all over with blood, so that his countenance, his beard, and his rags, formed an appearance equally horrible and loathsome. On each side of him were carried the heads of the two murdered gardes-du-corps upon pikes. After these came a promiscuous rabble: the Parisian army, with Lafayette at their head, followed next. Intermingled with these, and riding on the horses and on the carriages of the cannon, was an immense multitude of women, intoxicated with spirituous liquors, licentiousness, and blood, now howling impure songs, insulting the royal captives and the miserable gardes-du-corps, and at intervals stopping the procession to dance before the windows of the King's coach, in a style truly demoniac. Next came the carriage of the degraded Sovereign, in which were himself, his illustrious consort, the two royal children, the Marquise de Tourzel, their governess, her sister, Monsieur and Madame. These were succeeded by some of the King's suite; then came the hundred deputies from the National Assembly; the gardes-du-corps were in the rear, disarmed and bare headed, exhausted with hunger and fatigue. Several waggons loaded with flour, provided by the Duke of Orléans for the purpose, concluded the procession; which gave occasion to the mob, amongst other railleries against the unhappy family, to exclaim, "we are bringing to town the baker, the "baker's wife, and the little journeyman." After an humiliating journey of five hours and a half, the Royal Family, exhausted by distress, fatigue, and abstinence, were conducted to the Hotel de Ville, where their patience was further tried by a long harangue from Moreau de Saint Mery, and another, not less prolix, but more absurd, from Bailly, who called this day of indescribable horrors, a beautiful day.

The Royal
Family at the
Louvre.

The palace of the Louvre was fixed on for the abode of the Royal Family. It had long been out of repair, and the removal from Versailles was so sudden and unexpected, that orders could not possibly be issued in time to make it fit for habitation.

With this event the reign of Louis the Sixteenth

may be considered to have terminated. It is true that for nearly three years afterward he bore the title of King ; but, after his arrival in Paris, he enjoyed neither the authority of a sovereign, the freedom of a citizen, nor the respect due to a prisoner of war*.

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* In the account of the fifth and sixth of October, I have chiefly followed M. Bertrand de Moleville, who was an eye witness of the events. *Annals*, vol. ii. p. 59 to 154. See also *Procédure criminelle institutée au Chatelet de Paris*, published by authority. There are other accounts without number ; but they differ little as to the material facts. Some are suppressed, some qualified, but there is little express contradiction. A recent author, an apologist and eulogist of the Marquis de la Fayette, has assigned to him a conduct somewhat less culpable than others have described, and has ventured to contradict, forty-four years after the event, a fact upon which previous writers had well agreed, that of the heads of the gardes-du-corps carried before the royal carriage, and also that the Duke of Orléans made his appearance at Versailles. *Lafayette et la Revolution de 1830*, par B. Sarrans, Jeune, vol. i. p. 22. But long after this chapter had been written, the lectures of Professor Smyth on the French Revolution were published ; and I have, without altering in almost any particular, revised what I had written with the aid of his instructive remarks. *Mémoires sur La Vie de Marie Antoinette*, par Madame Campan, tom. ii. p. 77, and note.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-SEVENTH.

1789—1790.

Opinions entertained in England on the French Revolution.—
 Party formed in its favour.—State of the Royal Family.—
 The King's excursion.—Meeting of Parliament—King's
 Speech.—Address of the Lords—of the Commons.—Em-
 bargo on Corn.—Differences on the subject of the French
 Revolution.—Army estimates.—Observations of Mr. Mar-
 sham—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Fox—his observations on the con-
 duct of the French troops.—Colonel Phipps.—Mr. Gren-
 ville.—Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Fox—Mr.
 Burke—Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Burke's declaration.—Con-
 duct of Mr. Sheridan—Colonel Phipps—Mr. Pitt.—Esti-
 mates voted—Observations.—Mr. Fox's motion on the Test
 Act—Mr. Beaufoy—Motion opposed by Mr. Pitt—Mr.
 Yorke—Mr. Wilberforce—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Fox in reply
 —Motion negatived.—Mr. Fox's motion for a reform in Par-
 liament—opposed.—Mr. Burke—Mr. Milnes.—Mr. Burke
 —Motion lost.—Petition of Tobacconists—Bill for their
 relief.—Budget.—Lottery—prohibition to advertise illegal
 adventures.—Augmentation of the Speaker's salary.—Par-
 liamentary pension to Dr. Willis.—Burning of women abo-
 lished.—Miscellaneous transactions.—Origin of the dispute
 concerning Nootka Sound—formation of a British settle-
 ment.—Attacked by the Spaniards—observations.—Con-
 duct of the Spanish Government.—Naval and military
 preparations.—Proceedings of the English Government—
 negotiation—pretensions of Spain—answer.—Seamen im-
 pressed.—The King's message to Parliament.—Address
 of the Lords—of the Commons.—Motion by Mr. Fox—
 withdrawn—second motion.—Vote of credit.—Mr. Grey's
 motion for papers—Debate—negatived.—Mr. Francis's

motion for papers—answer.—Order of the day moved—
 Debate—Motion lost.—Close of the Session.—Preparations
 for war—friendly conduct of our allies.—France—proceed-
 ings in the National Assembly.—Naval preparations of
 Spain.—Instructions to the English Ambassador—Progress
 of the negotiation—appearances of a pacific disposition—
 altered conduct of Spain—answer to the English Memo-
 rial.—Arrival of Mr. Fitzherbert—adjustment proposed by
 Spain—supposed cause of change.—Proposals from Eng-
 land—terms offered by Spain—rejected—the terms pro-
 posed by England agreed to.—Spain has a dispute with
 America—pacific acts of Spain—progress of negotiation—
 conduct of France—of Holland.—New aggression of Spain
 —cautious proceedings of Mr. Fitzherbert—differences
 arranged—Convention.—Observations.

EVENTS so new and striking as those which had
 occurred in France were inevitably viewed in England
 with a degree of interest which the vicinity of the
 country, its influence on all our transactions for so
 many years, its constant opposition to us in politics,
 and our very rivalry in arts and literature, our
 daily intercourse and frequent imitation, rendered
 little less intense than would have been created had
 they been domestic.

Accustomed to view the government of France as
 one completely tyrannical, to consider the want of popu-
 lar representation, the absence of popular trial, and in-
 carceration without any means of public investigation,
 as decisive proofs of power without restraint, and of
 oppression without redress,—many people in England
 rejoiced in the resistance which they supposed a brave
 and insulted people to be making against galling inju-
 ries and intolerable grievances. The opposition made
 by the Parliament of Paris was considered highly me-
 ritorious; and the overthrow of the Bastille was hailed
 as a glorious triumph of liberty, achieved by patriotism
 and courage. It was hardly less celebrated in London
 than in Paris; and the benevolence of the nation en-

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Opinions
 entertained in
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couraged a hope that, in France, a constitution like that of England, founded on a well-adjusted representative system, and sustained by popular courts of justice and a free press, would obliterate the wrongs of ages, and lay the foundation of happiness for the present generation and for remote posterity. Such were the visions of those who, as yet unacquainted with the real causes of events, and deriving all their information from the columns of newspapers and the pages of pamphlets, danced to the tune of the national Carillon, and thronged the theatres to view, in mimic representation, the storming of the Bastille.

This effervescence soon received a check from the daily horrors which attended the pursuit after freedom. The cruel and cowardly murders which stained the fourteenth of July were palliated as accidental effusions of popular fury, instigated by the recollection of long-continued oppression, and acting, in the particular instances, through the impulses of error and misrepresentation. The burnings, the murders, the methodical plunderings which disgraced the provinces, could admit of no such apology; and the atrocious observation of Barnave, rather approved than repressed by his colleagues, made many revolve, with serious apprehension, the state of a people among whom such horrors could be popular. Attached from principle and from unviolated habit to a strict regard for property, the well-minded people of England saw, with reflections very remote from approbation, the wanton confiscation of rights, and the unsparing spoliation effected by the decrees of the fourth of August, while many who had before been willing to excuse, if not to defend, these enormities, were utterly unable to vindicate, even in a slight degree, the horrors of the fifth and sixth of October.

Party formed
in favour of
the revolution;

Yet there was not wanting a large number of persons who wrote and spoke in favour of all the transactions in France, who vindicated their violence and applauded their impiety, treating the sufferers with obloquy or with ridicule. Many entered with the zeal of adventurous spirits into the career newly

opened, hoping that, even if there were immediate evil, it would be amply counterbalanced by eventual good; many, who disliked ecclesiastical establishments, rejoiced in the overthrow of the church authority and property, expecting that the Christian religion would remain uninjured, notwithstanding the rudeness of the shock; some few beheld, with indifference at least, if not with satisfaction, the probable extinction of all religion; a large party, who saw with spleen and dissatisfaction the establishment of an hereditary privileged order in the state, exulted in the overthrow of a high, honourable, and ancient nobility; and there were not wanting some who saw, with the eye of hopeful anticipation, the destruction of royal authority itself. The supporters of these doctrines were self-important and overbearing; they associated with Frenchmen who came to this country not indisposed, and, as many thought, not unpaid, nor unfurnished with the means of paying others, to spread the doctrines and applaud the practices of the prevailing party. Many Englishmen visited France, to return, not, as in former times, perfected in fashions and learned in luxuries, but imbued with, and prepared to diffuse, the modern doctrines, and to shew, if occasion should arise, the sincerity of their opinions by a corresponding vigour in their proceedings. Already had discussion assumed an embittered quality; the words aristocrat and democrat were no less current here than on the other side of the channel; and, whatever might be the real merits of the question, it soon became obvious that all who, from education, habits, association, or circumstances, were hostile to the establishments, the laws, or the religion of England, were the vehement admirers of the proceedings in France.

Unmoved by such demonstrations, unswayed by little personal considerations, a party composed of opulent, powerful, and eminent individuals, contemplated these events with alarm and apprehension. In forming their judgment, these distinguished persons were not swayed by the littleness of factious feeling, or influenced by fear of the aggrandizement of an ancient and against it.

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rival; for they thought, whether erroneously or not, that, as a preponderating military power, France had accomplished her own destruction; besides, they readily admitted that, for a century past, while some great European nations had started, if not into being, at least into political importance, and others had extended their limits by annexation, by conquest, and by treaty, no great continental addition had been made to the Gallic dominion, nor had she, except by the occupation of Corsica, increased her possessions in this quarter of the world. The solicitude of this party was founded entirely on the anticipation of evils, sure to be produced by the dissemination of principles, supported by a powerful and successful example, which would abolish the respect due to rank and station, unsettle the tenure of property, emancipate mankind from the restraints imposed by gratitude, duty, and religion, and arm the numerous, the envious, the clamorous, the violent, and the unjust, against all who possessed that which the others coveted, or had attained to honours and emoluments which the other class could not expect, either from their talents or their virtue*.

State of the
Royal Family.June 25th to
July 18th.
The King's
excursion.

Nov. 18th.

In England, during the summer, nothing occurred which can be deemed of sufficient importance to claim commemoration. His Majesty continued to improve in health, and was daily gratified by the joyous acclamations of an affectionate people. Accompanied by the Queen and the three eldest princesses, he made a tour of relaxation and pleasure to the West of England, visiting Weymouth and Plymouth. Their reception, wherever they passed, was most cheering and gratifying; and the King returned to Windsor with recruited health and heartfelt satisfaction. Loyal and affectionate addresses were continually presented from corporate bodies and other assemblies, and the Sovereign's first visit to a theatre in London was hailed by his people with joy similar to that expressed by an affectionate family on the recovery of a beloved parent.

1790.

Parliament was not assembled until after Christ-

* *Mémoires d'un Homme d'État*, tom. ii. p. 106.

mas; the King opening the session in person. His speech shewed that the affairs of the Continent had been anxiously considered in the cabinet; they had engaged, he said, his most serious attention; but no expression indicated the feelings they excited. The disposition of all other nations toward this country was friendly, and gratitude was due to Providence for preserving to us the blessings of peace.

Lord Viscount Falmouth moved and Lord Cathcart seconded an address, which was agreed to without even a remark. The two noble Lords spoke of the struggles in France as a proof of the excellence of our own government; and contrasted the present happy state of the country with her condition during the American war.

Equally unanimous was the vote of the lower House, where Lord Viscount Valletort moved and Mr. Cawthorne seconded the address. In the course of his speech, the noble mover adverted to the unhappy situation of France. Anarchy and confusion reigned in the provinces, where the capricious will of a licentious mob too often prevailed as law, and unexampled barbarities were committed with impunity. In the capital, commotion, violence, and disorder, frequently took place of harmony and good government. The most distinguished had been obliged to withdraw from their country, and seek an asylum among strangers; and, to conclude the distressing scene, the King himself was almost a prisoner in his own palace.

These observation produced no reply; Mr. Pitt gave a short explanation of an order in council which had been issued respecting corn, which required a bill of indemnity. With this, Alderman Sawbridge declared himself almost, if not altogether, satisfied; and the bill passed with so little notice, that no trace of it is to be found in the collection of Debates*.

Considering that, in the King's speech, allusion was made to the revolution in France, and that, in both Houses, members expressed opinions unfavour-

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1790.

Jan. 21st.
Meeting of
Parliament.

King's speech.

Address of
the Lords.

Of the
Commons.

Embargo on
corn.

Indemnity.

Discussion on
the subject of
the Revolution.

* See Annual Register, vol. xxxii. p. 65.—30th Geo. III. c. i.

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able to that event, it would seem surprising that no observation was offered on the other side. A schism on this great subject had already taken place among the members of opposition, and, probably, it was not thought proper to display their disunion on the very first possible moment, although it was not unknown among their friends, and was anticipated by the public.

Feb. 5.
Army
estimates.

An undisguised avowal was made, when the Secretary at War moved, in a Committee, for seventeen thousand four hundred and forty-eight men, including invalids.

Mr. Marsham.

Mr. Marsham, without proposing any amendment, made general objections to the magnitude of this establishment. His Majesty's speech had assured them of the friendly dispositions of foreign nations; all former precedents shewed that, in peace, a reduction of military force had taken place; but now it went on augmenting; and he compared the present times to the year 1775, when the country was at peace, and yet a much smaller army was maintained, although we had to defend the thirteen American colonies, Florida, and Minorca.

Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Pitt adverted to another part of the speech, in which the King said that the internal situation of different parts of Europe had been productive of events which had engaged his most serious attention, and denied that it furnished, on the whole, an argument, or even warranted a presumption, that we might not be involved in war. This was the time for securing the permanent tranquillity of the country, when our former enemies were engaged in their own domestic concerns, and we were adding daily to our strength, wealth, and prosperity.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox agreed with the minister that we ought not to diminish our security by untimely reductions; but yet the spirit of the people, and their zeal for the preservation of the constitution, ought not to be pressed too far; and he avowed that this was the precise period, when, if ever, he should be least jealous of an increase of the army, from any danger to be apprehended

to the constitution. The example of a neighbouring nation had proved that former imputations on armies were unfounded calumnies; and it was now known, throughout Europe, that by becoming a soldier, a man did not cease to be a citizen. Not, therefore, on any ground of alarm for the constitution, but on principles of economy alone, he opposed the augmentation of the army. The concern expressed by the King, at the events that had taken place in Europe, did him honour; but, on reviewing those events, and estimating their probable consequences, did the likelihood of an attack on this country appear to be increased? Was it probable that, while her whole attention was occupied by so important an object as the arrangement and formation of her own constitution, France would attack our West India Islands? The new form of government which she was likely to assume was calculated to render her a better neighbour, and less disposed to hostility, than when she was subject to the cabal and intrigues of ambitious and interested statesmen.

Nor had we more to apprehend from other continental powers, whose state he briefly reviewed. Some persons, he proceeded, might be of opinion, that this was the time to take advantage of the situation of France. It undoubtedly was so; but it should not be by triumphing in her distress—not by ungenerously attacking her dominions, when she was ill able to defend them—not by following her example toward this country in the late war; but by convincing her, that, while we were generous to her, we were considerate to ourselves, by taking the advantage of her situation to reduce our establishment, with a view to the diminution of our national incumbrances. This was the only mode of retaliation he should prescribe.

It appeared as if the leader of opposition had caught at this opportunity to introduce, rather unnecessarily, his tribute of applause to the military of France for their conduct during the revolution. His speech was so viewed by Colonel Phipps, who animadverted on it with considerable severity.

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His observations on the conduct of the French troops.

Colonel
Phipps

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9th.
Mr. Grenville.

The resolutions having been agreed to, and the report brought up by Mr. Gilbert, Sir Grey Cooper resisted the supply on the ground of economy; and several members, who followed on both sides, argued that point alone; when Mr. Grenville, after explaining this part of the subject, and reviewing the state of our possessions in many parts of the world, adverted to what had fallen from Mr. Fox on the subject of France. He had said that danger was not to be apprehended, as she had ceased to be formidable. If her situation rendered her less formidable than she had been five years ago, when the last augmentation was voted, still it was not politic to alter our establishment on every change in the circumstances of rival powers. Three years ago the same right honourable gentleman had declared France to be even more formidable than in the reign of Louis the Fourteenth. A few years had produced the present alteration, and, in a few years, another might be effected.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox said, that after her late behaviour in the Dutch dispute, it was not very likely France should wish to commence hostilities against this country. He was not mortified at the notice of his mistaken speculation, made three years since, on the power of France. A change, as sudden as unexpected, had taken place; some exulted in it, and, in one point of view, he was of the number, from feeling and from principle. He disregarded the insinuation against his political foresight; for even if a person possessing the gift of prophecy had appeared at that time in Paris, or in London, and foretold the extraordinary occurrences which had arisen, every word issuing from his lips would have been regarded as a proof of insanity. In three years more, France might, by another change, become more formidable than ever; it was not likely, however, that the growth of power should be so sudden as to prevent us from providing against its inimical effects. The difference between pulling down and building up was great; a nation might fall from a pinnacle of power to actual inertness; but a sudden rise into grandeur was impossible.

Mr. Pitt insisted on the necessity of being prepared against danger. The present situation of France must, sooner or later, terminate in general harmony and regular order; and although she might then be more formidable, she might also become less obnoxious as a neighbour. He wished for the restoration of tranquillity in that country, although it appeared to him to be far distant. Whenever her system should be rightly arranged; if it should prove freedom rightly understood, freedom resulting from good order and good government, France would be one of the most brilliant powers in Europe, enjoying that just liberty which he venerated, and the invaluable existence of which it was his duty, as an Englishman, peculiarly to cherish. Nor could he regard with envious eyes an approximation in a neighbouring state to those sentiments which were the characteristics of every British subject.

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Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Burke then rose, and delivered, not unexpectedly, his opinions on the state of France. After some observations in answer to Mr. Grenville and Mr. Pitt, he said that France had hitherto been our first object in all considerations concerning the balance of power; but France, at this time, in a political light, was to be considered as expunged out of the system of Europe. Whether she could ever appear again as a leading power, was not easy to determine, but at present he considered her as not politically existing; and it would take much time to restore her to her former active condition. *Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse audivimus*, might possibly be the language of the rising generation. He did not mean to deny that it was our duty to keep our eye on that nation, and to regulate our preparations by the symptoms of her recovery. To her strength, and not to her form of government, we were to attend; because republics, as well as monarchies, were susceptible of ambition, jealousy, and anger, the usual causes of war. But if, while France continued in this swoon, we should go on increasing our expenses, we should certainly make ourselves less a match for her when it became our concern to arm.

Mr. Burke.

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In a political view, France was low indeed. She had lost every thing, even to her name:—

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“*Jacet ingens littore truncus,*

“*Avolumque humeris caput, et sine nomine corpus.*”

He was astonished—he was alarmed at it—he trembled at the uncertainty of all human greatness. Since the House had been prorogued, the French had shewn themselves the ablest architects of ruin that had hitherto existed in the world. In that short space of time they had completely pulled down to the ground their monarchy, their church, their nobility, their law, their revenue, their army, their navy, their commerce, their arts and manufactures. They had done their business for us as rivals, in a way in which twenty Ramilies or Blenheims could never have effected; were we absolute conquerors, and France to lie prostrate at our feet, we should be ashamed to send a commission to settle their affairs which could impose on them so hard a law, and so destructive of all their consequence as a nation, as that which they had imposed on themselves.

France, by the mere circumstance of its vicinity, had been, and, in a degree, always must be, an object of our vigilance, either with regard to her actual power, or to her influence and example. From her example, our friendship and our intercourse with her had once been, and might again become, more dangerous to us than her worst hostility. In the reign of Louis the Fourteenth, of which he gave a spirited description, the example of an arbitrary sovereign, high in fame and glory, had produced most injurious effects on our sovereigns Charles and James. At this day, he said, the evil is totally changed; but there is an evil, and the natural mental habits of mankind are such, that the present distemper of France is far more likely to be contagious than the old one; it is not easy to spread a passion for servitude among the people; but, in all evils of the opposite kind, our natural inclinations are flattered. In the case of des-

potism there is the *fœdum crimen servitutis*; in the last, the *falsa species libertatis*; and accordingly, as the historian says, *pronis auribus accipitur*. The example of a relentless despotism exists no longer. Our present danger from the example of a people, whose character knows no medium, is, with regard to government, a danger from anarchy; a danger of being led, through an admiration of successful fraud and violence, to the imitation of the excesses of an irrational, unprincipled, proscribing, confiscating, plundering, ferocious, bloody, and tyrannical democracy. On the side of religion, the danger of their example is no longer from intolerance, but from atheism; a foul, unnatural vice, foe to all the dignity and consolation of mankind; which seems in France, for a long time, to have been embodied into a faction, accredited and almost avowed.

These, he proceeded, are our present dangers from France: but the very worst part of the example set, is, in the late assumption of citizenship by the army, and the whole of the arrangement, or rather disarrangement, of their military.

He was sorry that his right honourable friend (Mr. Fox) had dropped even a word expressive of exultation on that circumstance; or that he seemed of opinion that the objection to standing armies was at all lessened by it. He attributed this opinion entirely to his known zeal for the best of all causes, liberty. That it was with a pain inexpressible he was obliged to have even a shadow of a difference with one whose authority would be always great with him, and with all thinking people—*Quæ maxima semper censetur nobis, et erit quæ maxima semper*.—He added many strong expressions on Mr. Fox's understanding, abilities, and personal character. To his great and masterly understanding, he had joined the greatest possible degree of that natural moderation which is the best corrective of power; he was of the most artless, candid, open, and benevolent disposition; disinterested in the extreme; of a temper mild and placable, even to a fault; without one drop of gall in his whole constitution. If he came

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forward to mark an expression or two of his best friend, it was from his anxiety to keep the distemper of France from the least countenance in England, where some wicked persons had shewn a disposition to recommend an imitation of the French spirit of reform. All the acts of his public life would shew that he was no enemy to reformation; but the French, instead of redressing grievances, and improving the fabric of their government, had first destroyed all the balances and counterpoises which serve to fix the state and give it a steady direction; then, with atrocious perfidy and in breach of all faith, they instantly laid the axe to the root of all property, and consequently of all national prosperity, by the principles they established, and the example they set, in confiscating the possessions of the church. They made and recorded a sort of institute and digest of anarchy, called the rights of man, in such a pedantic abuse of elementary principles as would have disgraced boys at school; systematically destroying every hold of authority by opinion, religious or civil, on the minds of the people. By this mad declaration they subverted the state, and brought on such calamities as no country, without a long war, had ever been known to suffer, and which might, in the end, produce such a war, and perhaps many such. The worst effect of all their proceedings was on their military, which was rendered an army for every purpose but that of defence. He did not think, as an abstract principle, that soldiers were to forget they were citizens; but the events which had happened in France, where the abstract principle was clothed with its circumstances, furnished no matter of exultation, either in the act or the example. These soldiers were not citizens, but base, hireling mutineers; mercenary, sordid deserters, wholly destitute of any honourable principle. They were deserters to a cause, the real object of which was to level all those institutions, and break all those connexions, natural and civil, that regulate and hold together the community, by a chain of subordination; to raise soldiers against their officers; servants against their masters; tradesmen against their customers;

artificers against their employers ; tenants against their landlords ; curates against their bishops ; and children against their parents. He then drew a striking picture of the state of the French, so different from any thing known in our social system. They had put their army under such various principles of duty, that it was more likely to breed litigants, pettifoggers, and mutineers, than soldiers*. He felt concern that this strange thing, called a Revolution in France, should be compared with the glorious revolution in England, and contrasted the two events in most forcible terms. The Prince of Orange, of the blood royal of England, was called by the flower of the aristocracy to defend its ancient constitution, not to level all distinction. The monarchy was not impaired, but strengthened. The nation kept the same ranks, the same privileges, the same franchises, the same rules for property, the same subordinations, the same order in the law, in the revenue, and in the magistracy ; the same Lords, the same Commons, the same corporations, the same electors.

The church was not impaired. Her estates, her majesty, her splendour, her orders and gradations continued the same. She was preserved in her full efficiency, and cleared only of a certain intolerance, which was her weakness and disgrace. The church and the state were the same after the revolution that they were before, but better secured in every part.

In conclusion, Mr. Burke said he was near the end of his natural, probably still nearer the end of his political, career ; he was weak and weary, and wished for rest. In the constitution itself he wished few alterations,—happy if he left it not the worse for his exertions in its service.

Mr. Fox acknowledged the kindness with which Mr. Burke had spoken of him personally, and, with some exceptions, extolled his speech, as one of the wisest and most brilliant orations ever delivered within those walls. Such was his sense of Mr. Burke's judgment, such his knowledge of his principles, such his

Mr. Fox.

* The military were sworn to obey the King, the nation, and the law.

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value for them, and such the estimation in which he held his friendship, that, if he were to put all the political information he had acquired from books, from science, and from knowledge of the world and its affairs, into one scale, and the improvement which he had derived from his right honourable friend's instruction and conversation in the other, he should be at a loss to say which would preponderate. He had stated, in the absence of his right honourable friend, that he could now look at a standing army with less constitutional jealousy than at any previous period; since, in France, the army had become soldiers without ceasing to be citizens, and would not act as the mere instruments of a despot. But, did such a declaration warrant the idea that he was a friend to democracy? He was equally hostile to all absolute forms, whether monarchical, aristocratic, or democratic. He was adverse to all extremes; a friend only to a mixed government, like our own, in which, if the aristocracy, or indeed either of the three branches were destroyed, the good effect of the whole, and the happiness derived under it, would be at an end. He disapproved of cabals or schemes for introducing dangerous innovation, but was not an enemy to all innovation; to innovation, our constitution owed its perfection. He lamented the scenes of bloodshed and cruelty which had been acted in France; but when the severe tyranny, under which the people had so long groaned was considered, these excesses might be spoken of with some degree of compassion. Unsettled as the present state of France appeared, it was preferable to the former condition, and ultimately the events in that country would be for the advantage of this. The difference between the revolutions in England and France arose from the disparity in their circumstances. France had been so long settling her constitution, because there was so much despotism to destroy; while, with us, in 1688, there was very little which called for destruction; a fact in itself sufficient to convince his right honourable friend that his apprehensions were groundless.

Mr. Burke, declaring that the severance of a limb from his body would not inflict greater pain than a public and violent difference of opinion with his right honourable friend, was yet glad he had delivered his opinions so plainly as to have drawn forth an explanation so satisfactory to himself, to the House, and to the nation.

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Mr. Burke.

Hitherto, although opinions strongly repugnant to each other had been expressed, nothing had occurred which portended a severance of Mr. Burke from Mr. Fox in party, much less any personal hostility; but Mr. Sheridan, while he paid high compliments to Mr. Burke's general principles, said he could not conceive how it was possible for a person who possessed such principles, or who valued our own constitution and revered the revolution which obtained it for us, to unite with such feelings an indignant and unqualified abhorrence of all the proceedings of the patriotic party in France. He conceived theirs to be as just a revolution as ours, proceeding upon as sound a principle, and a greater provocation. He vehemently defended the general views and conduct of the National Assembly. He could not even understand what was meant by the charge against them of having overturned the laws, the justice, and the revenues of their country. What were their laws? The arbitrary mandates of capricious despotism. What their justice? The partial adjudications of venal magistrates. What their revenues? National bankruptcy. In a fervid strain, he vindicated all the leading acts of the revolution. The public creditor had been defrauded; the manufacturer without employ; trade languishing; famine clang upon the poor; despair on all. In this situation, the wisdom and feelings of the nation were appealed to by the government; and was it to be wondered at, by Englishmen, that a people so circumstanced should search for the cause and source of all their calamities; or that they should find them in the arbitrary constitution of their government, and in the prodigal and corrupt administration of their revenues? For such an evil, when proved, what remedy could be resorted

Mr. Sheridan.

to, but a radical amendment of the frame and constitution itself? He joined with Mr. Burke in abhorring the cruelties that had been committed; but what was the striking lesson, the awful moral, that was to be gathered from the outrages of the populace? What but a superior abhorrence of that accursed system of despotic government, which had so deformed and corrupted human nature, as to make its subjects capable of such acts. And if a day of power came to the wretched populace, it was not to be wondered at, however it might be regretted, that their acts did not evince those feelings of justice and humanity which had been obliterated in them by the principles and the practice of their governors. The National Assembly had at all times interfered with zeal and alacrity for the maintenance of order and just subordination. What action of theirs authorised the appellation of "bloody, ferocious, and tyrannical democracy?" He justified all the acts which had taken place in France, extolled the characters of Lafayette, Bailly*, and other persons, and concluded by expressing an opinion that our own revolution was chiefly valuable, as it established, on a permanent basis, those sacred principles of government, and that reverence for the rights of man, which he could not value here, without wishing to see diffused throughout the world.

Mr. Burke's
declaration.

This speech, which might worthily have been delivered by Robespierre in the National Assembly, or by Camille Desmoulins in the garden of the Palais Royal, produced the effect which might be expected, and probably was intended,—a declaration from Mr. Burke, that henceforth Mr. Sheridan and he were entirely separated in politics. He complained of, and exposed, the misrepresentations by which his arguments had been perverted, and the falsifications by which he had been charged with statements of facts which he had never averred, and opinions which he had never expressed.

* It is said (Burke's Works, vol. v. p. 23, 8vo.) that Mr. Sheridan charged Mr. Burke with having cast reflections on Lafayette and Bailly, while Mr. Burke had not mentioned them, or if Lafayette, certainly not Bailly. I do not find the passage referred to in the Parliamentary History. See vol. xxviii. p. 367.

Mr. Sheridan did not, like Mr. Fox, endeavour to soften the features of political difference, or smooth the asperity of discordant opinion, by appearances of kind regret or friendly recollection; no expression of amicable feeling escaped him; on the contrary, he appeared with satisfaction and with pride to assume his station as political opponent of Mr. Burke.

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Conduct of
Mr. Sheridan.

Colonel Phipps having made a few observations on the different conduct of the British troops in 1780, and the French guards during the recent scenes, Mr. Pitt, in a manly and prudent strain, reviewed some of the observations which had been made. He thanked Colonel Phipps for the able and eloquent defence of some passages in his speech on a preceding day, applauded the remarks of Lord Valletort in moving the address, approved one part of the speech of Mr. Sheridan, but declared that he agreed with Mr. Burke in every point he had urged relative to the late commotions in France. He had delivered himself with warmth, but a warmth proceeding from a motive which did him the highest honour; his sentiments respecting the constitution inspired him with sincere and lasting gratitude. Happy and genuine freedom was enjoyed by Englishmen under their constitution, while the unqualified nominal liberty of the French was, in fact, absolute, direct, and intolerable slavery.

Colonel
Phipps.

Mr. Pitt.

After a few observations from Sir George Howard and Viscount Fielding, the resolutions were agreed to.

Estimates
voted.

In the debate, which is thus copiously abstracted, will be perceived the first public and authentic declaration of differences of opinion among the members of the opposition party; a disunion of that compact, and apparently well-cemented body, which, by its steady unanimity, no less than by its formidable ability, had so long divided and so powerfully influenced public opinion. The further proceedings of the session, although not devoid of importance, will require less specific detail.

Observations.

Mr. Fox, taking the station before occupied by Mr. Beaufoy, moved for a committee of the whole House to consider the acts of the 15th and 25th of

March 2nd.
Mr. Fox's motion on the test act.

Charles the Second, requiring persons taking certain appointments and offices to receive the sacrament of the Lord's supper. He described the test laws as the offspring of persecution and intolerance, founded on the imputation of principles and intentions to bodies of men without the evidence of facts. Much obloquy and unfounded calumny, he said, had been used to asperse the character of the Roman Catholics, on account of the supposed tendency of their religious tenets to occasion the commission of murder, treason, and other horrid crimes, from a principle of conscience; a base imputation, arising from uncharitable opinions. It was the haughty, arrogant, and illiberal language of persecution which led men to judge uncharitably, and to act with bitter intolerance. On the authority of Dr. Hoadley, he argued that the church could not be endangered by a body so small and void of influence as the Dissenters: danger could only arise from the supine indolence of the clergy, contrasted with the superior activity and zeal of the other party. He censured with great asperity a circular letter said to have been written by Dr. Horsley, Bishop of St. David's, to his clergy, and vindicated Dr. Priestley, whose attacks on the church and its tenets had been vigorously repelled by the Bishop. A desire to reform was not to be construed into an endeavour to subvert the ecclesiastical constitution. The Duke of Richmond and Mr. Pitt had both endeavoured to reform the constitution; yet both held high offices in the state; and Dr. Priestley might be at the head of the church with as little danger as the present minister at the head of the treasury. He spoke with some applause of Dr. Price's sermon on the Anniversary of the Revolution*, although he considered that his arguments would have better become a parliamentary speech than a sermon. To make the pulpit, the altar, or sacramental table, political engines he must ever condemn, whether in a Dissenter or a Churchman.

Mr. Beaufoy.

Mr. Beaufoy supported the motion in a speech of

* 4th Nov. 1789.

great length and ability, and was aided by Sir Henry Houghton, Mr. Martin, Mr. William Smith, and some other members.

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Mr. Pitt, although he paid a tribute of high applause to the Dissenters for their conduct on many great public occasions, declared a continuance of the test laws highly expedient. A reference had been made to their repeal in Ireland without danger to the constitution. The situation of the Irish and English churches was materially different; the former found a security in the superior numbers of the Catholics over the Dissenters, which bore a proportion of six to one, and therefore needed not, like the English church, the protection of test laws.

Motion opposed by
Mr. Pitt.

Mr. Powys said, that, on the principles Mr. Fox had laid down, not the Dissenters alone would be entitled to hold offices of trust and power, but the Jew, the Mahometan, the disciple of Brama, Confucius, and every head of a sect. (Mr. Fox cried "Hear! hear!").

Mr. Powys.

Mr. Yorke and Mr. Wilberforce were also opponents of the motion; but the greatest share of attention was bestowed on Mr. Burke.

Mr. Yorke and
Mr. Wilberforce.

In discussions concerning religion, he said, he was sorry to see any appearance of party spirit. To that he attributed an observation by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, that, countenanced by a minister of Mr. Fox's bold and enterprising character, the Dissenters might occupy places of great trust, and endanger the civil constitution. A minister, a man of brilliant talents, who had directed the government of this country with great glory, and great safety to the constitution, both in church and state (he alluded to the Earl of Chatham), in a debate in the upper House, when Dr. Drummond, the Archbishop of York, had called the dissenting ministers "men of close ambition," treated the charge as uncharitable and defamatory. After a pause, the noble Earl exclaimed, "The dissenting ministers are represented as 'men of close ambition. They are so, my lords; and 'their ambition is to keep close to the college of fishermen, not of cardinals, and to the doctrine of in-

Mr. Burke.

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“spired apostles, not to the decrees of interested and “aspiring bishops. They contend for a spiritual “creed, and spiritual worship. We have a Calvin- “istic creed, a Popish liturgy, and an Arminian “clergy*.” His right honourable friend had laid down the principles of toleration, and exclaimed against persecution! all persecution, civil or religious, was certainly horrible; but abstract principles might deceive even themselves. Of abstract principles he declared his utter dislike; he detested them when a boy, and he liked them no better now he had silver hairs. Abstract principles of natural right, which the Dissenters rested on as their strong hold, were most idle, useless, and dangerous. They superseded society, and broke asunder all those bonds which for ages had formed the happiness of mankind. Professing his peculiar regard and reverence for the established church, Mr. Burke spoke of the causes from which danger was to be apprehended, and commented on two printed catechisms circulated by the Dissenters for the use of young non-conformists. The first, written by Mr. Robinson, contained no precept of religion, but consisted of one continued invective against kings and bishops, forming by its misrepresentations a catechism of misanthropy and anarchy; and these catechisms, placed in the hands of Dissenters’ children, were teaching them in their infancy to lisp out condemnations against the established church, and forming in them a rising generation of its determined enemies, while, possibly, the preachers were themselves recommending a robbery and plunder of the church similar to that in France. Mr. Burke dwelt at large on the destruction of their church by the French; and from their proceedings, letters and publications, he inferred that the Dissenters were very likely to train up their rising generation to similar acts. He descanted with peculiar severity on a letter of Dr. Priestley, who declared that he hated all religious establishments, and thought them sinful and idolatrous, and

* These words are given as reported in the Parliamentary History; but see vol. i. p. 569. n.

one in which he talked of a train of gunpowder being laid to the church establishment, which would soon blow it up; "and if they refused to repeal the test and corporation acts, the establishment would soon tumble about their ears." He also read passages from Dr. Price's sermon, shewing, as he contended, that the total subversion of the church was the aim of some leading Dissenters. For the body at large he professed great respect, and admitted that, had the present motion been made ten years earlier, he should have been among its supporters.

Mr. Fox, in his reply, analyzed, most ably, the arguments which had been adduced against him, and expressed the greatest concern at the speech of Mr. Burke, which had filled him with grief and shame; but he was consoled by observing that it avowed every doctrine which he had laid down. He had stated principles, and argued from an application of inferences deducible from them; while his right honourable friend had resorted to pamphlets, private letters, anecdotes, conjectures, suspicions, and invectives. On such grounds, he had opposed a motion to which he would have been a friend ten years ago. He was astonished to hear that a test was imposed by the Dissenters upon their representatives, because they had declared that at the next general election they would support no candidate who was not well affected to the cause of civil and religious liberty. Did not gentlemen on the other side declare, that although their own opinions were friendly to the motion, yet, in obedience to the instructions of their constituents, who were churchmen, they considered themselves bound to oppose it? Was not this imposing a test? How different the conduct of the Dissenters, who were the constituents of two honourable members*, who assured them they might vote according to their conscience! In Doctor Priestley's manly declaration of his individual opinion, he saw no criminality. Influenced by sentiments of compassion at the late events in France,

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Mr. Fox in
reply.

* Mr. Windham and Mr. Tierney.

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the imagination of his right honourable friend had eagerly caught hold of such objects ; and, in contemplating the ruin of the government, the desolation of the church, the misery of the beggared ecclesiastics, and the general distresses of the inhabitants, he had lost the energy of his natural judgment, through the exquisite acuteness of his feelings ; otherwise, a person of his great good sense could never have been so led astray into enmity against the just cause of the Dissenters, as a body, merely because Dr. Priestley, Mr. Palmer, and Mr. Robinson, happened to differ from him in their speculative opinions.

Motion nega-
tived.

On a division, the motion was negated, by a majority greatly exceeding two to one*.

March 4.
Mr. Flood's
motion for a
Reform of
Parliament.

On another occasion, popular politics were introduced, and the revolution in France much referred to ; when Mr. Flood, according to notice, moved to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people in Parliament. He came prepared with a speech, which he delivered at great length ; the hearers came full of expectations, founded on his acquired reputation ; but they went away disappointed. He advanced, as an acknowledged principle, that property was the basis of representation. In ancient times, freehold was the only property, and the Baron came to the senate, representing his own estate ; but now that the King's patent filled the House of Lords, and freehold was not the only, nor even the greater part of the total wealth of the nation, the people were no longer sufficiently represented. A new body of constituents was therefore wanting ; and in their appointment, two things were to be considered ; one, that they should be sufficiently numerous, numbers being necessary to the spirit of liberty ; the other, that they should have a competent portion of property, for that is conducive to the spirit of order.

His speech.

He might be told that the time was improper, because there were disturbances in France ; but as that country would, in consequence, improve its constitu-

* Noes 294 ; Ayes 105. For some information and observations on this attempt, see *Memoirs of Dr. Watson, Bishop of Landaff*, vol. i. p. 262.

tion, so it was important that ours should be improved, that we might regain our wonted superiority. Virtual representation was all the people of England now possessed. America had, by some, been supposed to be virtually represented; and the argument, although fallacious, had imposed on multitudes. The influence of corruption within doors, and of this fraud of argument without, continued the American war. It terminated in separation, as it began in this empty vision of a virtual representation; and, in its passage from one of these points to the other, it swept away part of the glory, and more of the territory, of Great Britain, with the loss of forty thousand lives, and one hundred millions of treasure.

His proposed remedy, recommended by a long series of remarks, was, that one hundred members should be added, and that they should be elected by a numerous and new body of responsible electors; namely, the resident householders in every county*. Mr. Grigsby seconded the motion.

Little support was given to this proposition by any member. It was opposed, with more ability than was necessary, by Mr. Windham, Mr. Pitt, Mr. Grenville, Mr. Burke, and several other members. Mr. Fox partially approved the proposition as the best of all he had yet heard suggested, but did not support it on any general ground; Mr. Courtenay applauded it, but apparently with no other view than that of discharging a few jokes; and other members indulged in facetious remarks.

Opposed.

As to the American war, Mr. Burke denied that it would have been put an end to sooner, had the representation of the people been more perfect. It was originally the war of the people, and had been terminated, not by them, but by the virtue of a British House of Commons, who, without their interference, and almost without their consent, had the magnanimity to take upon themselves to put an end to it. Mr.

Mr. Burke.

* The speech, at length, is published in Flood's correspondence, p. 181.

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Mr. Milnes.

Mr. Burke.

Milnes, on the contrary, affirmed, that the people did interfere. The county of York had interfered strenuously three years before the war was ended, and all county members had voted for its termination. Mr. Burke denied the fact, and re-asserted that the county members did not so distinguish themselves. The late Sir George Savile had assured him that he had only one petition sent to him against the continuance of the war, and rejoiced that he had even that one to countenance his argument.

Motion lost.

A motion of adjournment was carried without a division.

Petition of
tobacconists.

March 8th.

April 16th.

In the other debates of the session, the affairs of France were not much mentioned, nor were the discussions in general interesting. Some dealers in tobacco and snuff presented petitions for the repeal of the statute which subjected them to the laws of excise. Mr. Sheridan took upon himself the patronage of this cause; and, on his motion, the question was referred to a Committee of the whole House. In the Committee, he made a motion, "that the survey of the excise is "inapplicable to tobacco." It was debated with great warmth, and, it is hardly necessary to add, with great ability, when to the name of the mover, those of Sir Grey Cooper, Mr. Windham, Mr. Fox, and Colonel Fullarton are added on the one side; and Mr. Pitt, Mr. Grenville, and Mr. Dundas on the other. In favour of the motion were urged all the general topics affecting the excise; particular hardships were instanced, and the general good character of the manufacturers was insisted on. Against it were cited the abuses which had been known to exist, their removal, and the great improvement of the revenue consequent on the new regulations. On a division, the motion was negatived by a majority of inconsiderable amount*.

April 29th.—
30th.
Bill for their
relief.

A bill, which was brought in to explain and amend the act of the last session, afforded ground for two other animated debates, in which it was attempted to

* Forty-four. Ayes 147; noes 191.

remove from the manufacturer some portion of the pressure of the law. Motions made on each occasion were rejected by considerable majorities.

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In presenting the budget, the minister drew a satisfactory picture of the financial and commercial condition of the country, which, as he proposed no new burthen, gave rise to no remark, except a few financial criticisms by Mr. Sheridan. A Lottery was a part of the ways and means; some observations were made on the immorality of this mode of adventure. The bill contained a clause to prohibit the announcement of illegal adventures, specious in their design, but fraudulently promulgated by needy and insolvent individuals, by imposing, on every person who should print or publish such proposal, a penalty of fifty pounds. There was little opposition to this restraint, and even that little was not popular.

April 19th.
Budget.

Lottery.

29th.
Prohibition to
advertise
illegal adventures.

In the course of the session, a proposal was brought forward by Mr. Frederick Montagu, for augmenting the salary of the Speaker. He stated that the income of the office, high, important, and laborious as it was, did not amount to three thousand pounds, salary and fees inclusive. There were some slight incidental emoluments; one termed equipment money, being a fee of one thousand pounds on the commencement of a new parliament; a service of plate of about one thousand pounds more; one hundred pounds a year for stationery; and, what every gentleman who had partaken of the hospitality of the Speaker's table must be glad of, two hogsheads of claret annually. Mr. Montagu paid high and deserved compliments to the gentleman who then filled the chair; whose general politeness and easy manners must necessarily endear him to every member; and, indeed, entitled him to be described, in the words of Lord Clarendon, as "a person of flowing civility and affability to all kinds of men."

March 10th.
Augmentation
of the
Speaker's
salary.

Some slight opposition was made to the motion for a committee, by Mr. Hussey, who referred the House to the old resolution, respecting the influence of the Crown. Mr. Burke shewed that this sententious

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jingle could not be brought to bear upon a proposition tending to establish the independence of a high officer of the House of Commons, over whom the King could have no controul; the motion was an antidote against the influence alluded to; as, by admitting it, the House would follow up their own principle, and, in an essential instance, diminish that influence. They would take the provision for their first officer into their own hands, and remove him from the sphere of influence.

In the committee, Mr. Montagu proposed the annual sum of five thousand pounds. Members of both parties vied in compliments to Mr. Addington, which he most gratefully acknowledged; an amendment was moved by Sir James Johnstone, at the call of many members, increasing the sum proposed by one thousand pounds, which, after a very short debate, was carried on a division*, and a bill, founded on this resolution, passed both Houses without an objection.

Parliamentary
pension to
Dr. Willis.

May 17th.

Another act of justice to a highly deserving individual was effected in the grant of a pension of one thousand pounds, for twenty-one years, to the Rev. Doctor Willis. It was recommended by a message from his Majesty, to which a proper address was returned, and a bill for carrying it into effect passed both Houses†.

May.
Burning of
women
abolished.

An alteration, consistent with humanity, and in accordance with the feelings of the times, was effected in the criminal law. Sir Benjamin Hammet obtained leave to bring in a bill for abolishing the judgment pronounced against women, in cases of petty treason, of being burnt alive, describing it as a savage relique of Norman policy. Mr. Sheridan expressed a wish that the measure should apply to high treason as well as the minor offence‡. A bill was framed according to

* 154 to 48.

† It passed so quietly, that it is unnoticed in the Parliamentary History; but the fact is recorded in the Annual Register, vol. xxxii. p. 100. See also Journals, vol. xlv. p. 492.

‡ Petty treason, in law, has three branches; where a servant kills his master; a clergyman his ecclesiastical superior; and a wife her husband: the punishment of burning women is traced by Blackstone, on the authority of Cæsar, to the

this suggestion, and passed without the slightest dissent; women were, in consequence, no longer sentenced to be burnt, but to be drawn and hanged; and, in petit treason, to the same judgment, with regard to dissection and the time of execution, as was directed in ordinary cases of murder.

Although the slave trade, and the condition of slaves in the colonies, were much agitated in France, the question in England remained nearly stagnant; some witnesses were examined before a committee, but no public declaration of progress was made; Sir William Dolben's act for regulating the middle passage was continued. Some ineffectual or unimportant efforts engaged the attention of the legislature, particularly propositions for equalizing weights and measures; for relief of debtors from the law of arrest; the claims of American loyalists; and one advanced by the Duke of Athol for revising the contract which had been made for selling the royalties of the Isle of Man; were successively discussed; but the general proceedings did not much interest the public, until a topic of more importance, an event which threatened war and demanded preparation, presented itself.

In the course of his voyages, Captain Cook explored, for it cannot be said he discovered, an extensive sound on the north-west coast of America; it was called by the natives Nootka, but the Spaniards had given it the name of San Lorenzo. As this country was extremely well situated for the acquisition of furs and ginseng for the Chinese market, a plan had been submitted to ministers in 1785, by Mr. Richard Cadman Etches, and authority given by government, through Sir John Macpherson, for opening such a trade, and, by a subscription, which included the name of the Governor-general himself, two vessels were procured and equipped; one under the command of Mr. Tipping, the other under Captain Meares, formerly a lieutenant in the navy. Their voyage having been perfectly successful, other merchants, resi-

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Miscellaneous
transactions.

Origin of the
dispute
concerning
Nootka Sound.

1786.
Formation of
a British
settlement.

Druids. In high treason, it is a punishment less revolting to decency, than that inflicted on men, of being cut into quarters.

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1789.

April 24th.
Attacked by
the Spaniards.

May 6th.

14th.

dent in India, sent two more vessels, called *Felice* and *Iphigenia*, larger, better appointed, and better fitted for trade than those which preceded, under the command of Captain Meares and Captain Douglas. On their arrival, Captain Meares purchased from the chief of the district a spot of land, erected a house, which he surrounded with a breast-work, planted a thirty-pounder in front, and hoisted the British flag. The two captains then proceeded to trade on the coast, in opposite directions, obtaining from the native chiefs grants of land, of which possession was taken in the King's name, and they had privileges of exclusive commerce, and leave to erect storehouses or other edifices. On their return, they found that the people they had left had finished a new vessel of forty tons, called the *North-west American*; which, with the *Iphigenia*, was to winter in the Sandwich Islands, while Captain Meares sailed in the *Felice* to Canton.

At this place, he formed arrangements for extending the commerce, entered into a copartnership with another trader, and sent him with two ships to winter at Nootka Sound, and erect a substantial house on the spot formerly purchased. Mr. Colnet, to whom this adventure was intrusted, was supplied with articles calculated to be sufficient for the dealings of three years, had a ship in frame of about thirty tons burthen, and was accompanied by artificers of various descriptions, and about seventy Chinese settlers, under the protection of the associated Company.

According to arrangement, the *Iphigenia* returned to Nootka Sound, and commercial operations were in active progress, when a Spanish vessel of twenty-six guns, called the *Princessa*, commanded by Don Estevan Joseph Martinez, from the port of San Blas, in the province of Mexico, entered the Sound, and was speedily joined by a snow of sixteen guns. For several days, mutual civilities passed between Captain Douglas and the Spaniard, when, on a sudden, the English captain was ordered on board the *Princessa*, and informed that Martinez was directed by the King of Spain to seize all vessels in those seas, and that he

was a prisoner. The Iphigenia was also seized in the name of his Catholic Majesty, the officers and crew conveyed on board the Princessa, and put in irons. The lands purchased by Captain Meares were also seized, his house occupied, the British colours taken down, and those of Spain hoisted; Martinez declaring that all lands, between Cape Horn and the sixtieth degree of north latitude, were the property of his Sovereign. Tyranny and torture were employed in compelling the English to work at the bidding of their captors; chicane and fraud in obliging Captain Douglas to sign a paper written in the Spanish language, which he did not understand; and rapine and violence in seizing all the articles of commerce, stores, provisions, nautical instruments, charts, and every thing which could be carried away, leaving the unfortunate owners so destitute that Captain Douglas was obliged to solicit Martinez for relief, and obtained only a scanty supply. The vessel called the North-West American was absent; Martinez used every art to make Captain Douglas sell her for an inadequate price; and, when he could not prevail, seized her the moment she appeared, despoiled her of her whole cargo, and dispatched her to Europe with skins purchased with the plunder. Two other vessels, the Argonaut and the Princess were captured by means equally treacherous, and the parties on board treated with so much hardship and indignity that Mr. Colnet was driven to insanity*.

On what pretensions this atrocious violation of the law of nations was perpetrated, no one could guess. Discovery was out of the question, as Magellan, and not a Spaniard, had first reached the spot; of occupation, there was not the slightest sign; the natives had never seen the face of a Spanish settler, and probably did not know that such a people existed. These events occurred during a period of profound peace; they were not announced in any gazette or proclama-

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June 9th.

July.

Observations.

* See the Memorial of Lieutenant John Meares to Lord Grenville, with the affidavits and documents annexed, published by Debrett, 1790, and an authentic statement of all the facts relating to Nootka Sound.

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1790.
January 4th
to April 15th.
Conduct of the
Spanish
government.

Naval and
military
preparations.

Proceedings of
the English
Government.

Negotiation.

Pretensions of
Spain.

tion, and full information was slowly obtained in England. Intelligence, unsatisfactory and obscure, was first transmitted by Mr. Merry, chargé d'affaires at the court of Madrid. He knew only by rumour that some hostile act had taken place, and could not obtain from the Spanish government any explanation; they evaded his inquiries, alleging distance and their want of detailed communication. As more light was thrown on the affair by disclosures which the lapse of time necessarily produced, new remonstrances were made, demands of explanation and satisfaction, in tones of increased vigour, were reiterated, until the Spanish government, alarmed at their predicament, began to prepare for war, examined their arsenals, and weighed their means for making a formidable naval equipment. The exportation of specie, even in a quantity hitherto specially licensed, was prohibited; a fleet of exercise, consisting of three ships of the line, three frigates, and a sloop, which had been assembled at Carthagena, was ordered to rendezvous at Cadiz; a squadron of thirteen sail of the line, four being of one hundred and twenty-four guns, with four or five frigates, was in a course of equipment at Ferrol; eight thousand seamen had been levied in Gallicia, the Asturias, and Biscay; orders were issued for twenty thousand more; and a military force was marched from Pontevedra to Corunna.

His Majesty's ministers, who, while intelligence was vague and uncertain, proceeded with the utmost caution, lost no time, when authentic information was obtained, in demanding adequate reparation and satisfaction. The Spanish minister, the Marquis del Campo, proffered a restitution of Captain Douglas's ship; but that, only on the ground of a general regard for England, and a presumed ignorance of the property of Spain, which alone, it was said, could have encouraged the individuals, of any nation, to resort to those coasts, with a view to establishment or commerce. The crown of Spain also distinctly asserted an exclusive right of sovereignty, navigation, and trade, on the north-west coast of America.

Mr. Merry was directed to represent, that, under these circumstances, his Majesty felt it due to the honour of his crown, and the rights of his people, to require the full and entire restitution of all the vessels, with their property and crews ; or as many of them as should, on fair examination, be found to have been British, and to insist on an indemnification to individuals for the losses sustained by their unjust detention and capture ; and, above all, on an adequate reparation to his Majesty for the injury done to his subjects, trading under the protection of the British flag, in parts where they had an unquestionable right to a free commerce, navigation, and fishery ; and to the possession of establishments, formed with the consent of the natives, in places unoccupied by other European nations.

Secrecy had been so well preserved during the progress of this transaction, that the first intimation which the public received of the probability of a war, was by a general impressment of seamen. On the following day, the King sent a message to both Houses of Parliament, stating the events which had occurred, and expressing his earnest wish that his Catholic Majesty might be induced to grant the satisfaction so unquestionably due, and that this affair might, by its termination, prevent any grounds of misunderstanding in future.

In the House of Lords, on an address moved by the Duke of Leeds, Lord Rawdon, while he admitted that the tranquil endurance of such insults would be a dereliction of that honour which England had so long maintained, wished for information, and moved for accounts of the trade to the country, and the fisheries on the coast, and for copies of correspondence. After a debate of some duration, the Lord Chancellor reminded the House that the only question before them was the address to his Majesty, on which no difference of opinion had been expressed ; and it was unanimously agreed to.

Mr. Pitt moved the address in the House of Commons, and it passed without a division, although not without considerable animadversion on the conduct of

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Answered.

May 4th.
Seamen im-
pressed.
The King's
message to
Parliament.

Address of
the Lords.

Of the
Commons.

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Motion by
Mr. Fox.

government. They knew nothing, Mr. Fox observed, which they had not known three weeks before; and had the public then been apprized of the facts which his Majesty's message had communicated, effects which had been produced on the funds and on the general feeling might have been prevented.

After the address had been carried, Mr. Fox moved for an account of the amount and value of the trade to Nootka Sound; but Mr. Burke observed that it would be difficult to fix a proper value; it might, indeed, with propriety be overvalued in negotiation, for the purpose of obtaining a compensation or equivalent. The Court of Spain, he observed, had no exclusive right to the trade; it was in the natives. Extension of dominion would be to us a grievous calamity; were all the foreign territories of Spain thrown into the scale of England, they would make us the weaker by the accumulation of distant dominion. The motion was withdrawn.

10th.
Vote of credit.

Mr. Fox then moved for an account of the state of armaments in Spain; but, after a few remarks in opposition, this motion was negatived, and a vote of credit for a million, to defray necessary expenses, was passed.

12th.
Mr. Grey's
motion for
papers.

Thus far, no impediments had arisen to obstruct the course of government; but Mr. Grey produced a debate, by moving the communication made by the Spanish ambassador, referred to in his Majesty's message, and its date. He felt most strongly, he said, for the honour and dignity of the nation; some treated national honour as visionary, but he considered it a mere truism, that a nation without honour was a nation without power. He lamented the probability of increasing the pressure of burthens on the people by a war, however victoriously conducted. The papers required would shew whether we had been hurried on to the verge of hostilities by the rashness, credulity, or inattention of ministers, or from circumstances which human foresight could not have prevented.

Mr. Lambton seconded the motion, which was vigorously supported by Mr. Windham, Mr. Fox, and

some other members, and shortly opposed by Colonel Phipps, Mr. Wilberforce, Mr. Pitt, and others. Mr. Grey replied, alleging that the reasons given by the minister and his friends were unsatisfactory; and again lamenting the necessity of imposing additional taxes on a people already so much burthened, he exclaimed with the poet,—

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“ By heaven, I had rather coin my heart,
“ And drop my blood for drachmas, than to wring
“ From the hard hands of peasants their vile trash.”

On a division, the motion was negatived*.

Negatived.

Favoured by the events which had occasioned the King's message, Mr. Francis moved for an account of the dates of the several appointments of ambassadors to the Court of Spain, with their respective salaries and emoluments. He laboured to convince the House that his motion was obvious, proper, and natural, and calculated to obtain information important in itself, and ultimately connected with the present state of affairs, without betraying any secret of state. Mr. Pitt agreed to the motion, as no information was required which was not, in a great measure, already before the public.

13th.
Motion by
Mr. Francis
for papers.

Agreed to.

On the foundation afforded by these papers, Mr. Francis moved a series of resolutions, affirming, that four ambassadors had been appointed to the Court of Madrid, at an expense exceeding thirty-five thousand pounds; and praying that directions might be given for the due performance of their duties by ministers at foreign courts; and alluded to the appointment of the Earl of Chesterfield to the Court of Madrid, where he had never appeared.

20th.
He moves
resolutions.

Mr. Burgess fully explained the nature and course of the diplomatic appointments, and shewed the causes which had occasioned the absence of the Earl of Chesterfield, and delayed the arrival in Madrid of Mr. Fitzherbert, who was now appointed; and, in conclusion, moved, first for the previous question, but correcting himself, the order of the day.

Answer.

Order of the
day moved.

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Debate.

A debate of no great length or vigour was maintained, which was wound up by a reply from Mr. Francis, who said, his wish was to have his motions stand upon the Journals; he should, therefore, hope the honourable gentleman would withdraw his motion for the order of the day, and abide by that for the previous question. This request not being complied with, Mr. Francis accused ministers of wishing to suppress the facts stated in his resolutions; but their publicity would be increased in proportion to the efforts at concealment. His declaration that we had no ambassador at Madrid, had been answered by saying that we had at the time two at Paris. Thus superfluity was substituted for want; that the Earl of Chesterfield omitted his duties at Madrid, while he was going about France like a wandering Jew, was a fact most disgraceful both to the country and to the Earl himself.

Mr. Francis's
motion lost.June 10th.
Close of the
session.

The order of the day was voted*.

In his speech at the close of the session, beside thanking the House of Commons for its liberality, and depicting, in glowing colours, the improved state of manufactures, commerce, and navigation, the King said, "I have not hitherto received the answer of Spain to my representation. I continue to entertain the strongest desire for the maintenance of peace on just and honourable grounds; but, under present circumstances, I feel it indispensably necessary to proceed with expedition and vigour in those preparations, the objects of which have already received your unanimous concurrence." His Majesty also expressed full satisfaction and confidence in the assurances and conduct of his allies.

Preparations
for war.

May 5.

Upon the first apprehension of the probability of a war, ministers had taken prudent precautions for securing our own colonial possessions, and for assuring the co-operation, or at least the neutrality, of continental powers. Proper instructions were transmitted to the consuls on the coast of Barbary, and to General O'Hara, who commanded at Gibraltar; but, on this

occasion, the fire of youthful bravery glowed again in the bosom of the illustrious veteran, Lord Heathfield, who solicited and obtained permission to revisit the scene of his well-acquired glory as military commander. His Majesty's dominions in America and the West Indies were equally the objects of precaution; and Lord Dorchester, the governor of Canada, was directed to use his best endeavours to influence the government of the United States in favour of Great Britain. Orders, too minute and exact to be recapitulated in detail, were forwarded to the governors of the Leeward Islands, of Jamaica, the Bahamas, Cape Breton, and Nova Scotia, for their own safety, and for obtaining useful intelligence. Nor was India overlooked amid the general precautions; and for each of the presidencies proper naval and military succours were prepared.

Communications were made to Holland and Prussia, and the governments of those countries shewed every disposition to afford succours, in conformity with the late treaty. Holland immediately prepared an armament of five ships of the line and five of sixty guns, the expense of which, for four months, estimated at about eighty thousand pounds, was to be borne by England. Prussia readily promised compliance with all her engagements, intimating, at the same time, that Spain would not venture to rush on hostilities with England, unless assured of the assistance of Russia and Austria, with which powers she was negotiating an alliance, and Denmark would be invited to accede*.

Friendly conduct of our allies.

Communications were also made to France; but, in the unsettled state of that country, they produced only a mixture of ministerial cunning and democratic violence. M. de Montmorin, the French minister, expressed regret at the misunderstanding between England and Spain, and insidiously offered the mediation

France.

Offers to mediate.

* Narrative of the Negotiation, &c. p. 105. This probability was not overlooked by a political writer in London, who said, "The first shot that is fired against Spain, is equally so against France, and possibly against the same northern confederacy, which, during the last war, was so formidable and fatal to Great Britain." See "The Errors of the British Ministry in the Negotiation with the Court of Spain."—Debrett, 1790, p. 29.

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Proceedings
in the Na-
tional Assem-
bly.

May 14.

22, 28.

of his sovereign. The British armament, he added, rendered it necessary for France to arm; but this was merely a measure of precaution; and the King hoped that nothing would be proposed to the Spanish monarch which could affect his dignity, his rights, or the essential interests of his crown. This declaration was immediately followed by an order for fitting out fourteen sail of the line.

In taking this measure, the French minister hoped to retain and display with effect the King's prerogative of making war and peace; but he was sadly disappointed. The supply required for the armament was granted by the National Assembly without hesitation; but, after a series of stormy debates, a decree was passed, in ten articles, importing that the right of peace and war belongs to the nation; the external safety of the kingdom, and of maintaining its rights and possessions, to the King, who had, also, the right of keeping up foreign political relations, the conducting of negotiations, the choice of agents, the making of warlike preparations proportioned to those of the neighbouring states, the distribution of the military and naval force, and the command and direction of it in war. In case of hostilities, impending or commenced, the King was bound to notify such circumstance, without delay, to the legislative body; to explain the causes and motives; and if they should be of opinion that the hostilities had arisen from a culpable aggression on the part of the ministers, or any other agent of the executive power, the author of it was to be prosecuted for the crime of *Leze Nation*. And, in conclusion, the Assembly, denouncing every species of conquest, declared that its force should never be employed against the liberty of any people. If the legislative decreed against hostilities, the executive power was to take immediate measures for their termination; if war was declared, the legislature might, at any time, require the executive power to conclude a peace, and fix a period for disbanding the extraordinary army.

Injurious as these decrees were to the royal autho-

city, they were obtained with difficulty by the strenuous exertions of Mirabeau, against the more popular propositions of Duport, Barnave, and Alexander Lameth, who wished to take from the King all authority in matters of peace or war*.

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As mediation in diplomatic language often means arbitration, and as an armed arbitrator is apt to enforce his own award, the offer of M. Montmorin was declined; but, in the existing state of things, Earl Gower, the English ambassador at Paris, was instructed to make no remonstrance against the French armament.

Mediation
rejected.

Nor was the Spanish government inactive. The fleet, under Lieutenant General Borja, consisting of three ships of the line, six frigates, and two sloops, sailed from Carthagena, to which port orders had been transmitted for the immediate equipment of six sail of the line and two frigates; while four line of battle ships and some frigates were arming at Cadiz. Another armament, of three sail of the line and two store ships, was preparing at Ferrol; and, upon the whole, the Spaniards were getting ready for immediate service about twenty sail of the line.

Naval prepara-
tions of
Spain.

Mr. Fitzherbert was instructed, as a preliminary to all discussion, to demand from Spain reparation to the parties injured, and a declaration of the reasons for the concession. If this proposal were acceded to, no questions of abstract right were to be discussed; but should Spain make it necessary, the ambassador was to declare that England could never admit a territorial claim extending to places which the Spaniards neither possessed nor occupied; nor the claim of exclusive navigation or commerce in the American Pacific seas. British ships could be excluded only from the ports of countries actually in the possession of Spain, and so far as was necessary for preventing a contraband trade. Mr. Fitzherbert was instructed,—first, to secure the unmolested freedom of fishing for whales and seals in any part of the American seas, or of the

Instructions to
the English
ambassador.

May 16th.

* Lacretelle, *Historie de France*, tom. viii. p. 57.

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Pacific Ocean, and to express his Majesty's readiness to agree to any proper provisions for preventing his subjects from making the fishery a pretext for carrying on contraband trade. The bonâ-fide occupation of Nootka Sound by British subjects conferred a title to the lands, and a right to carry on commerce, unless earlier possession on the part of Spain, or of any other nation, could be proved. Should satisfaction be positively denied, or Spain maintain her present pretensions, Mr. Fitzherbert was to leave Madrid and repair to Lisbon.

25th.

Progress of
negotiation.

When Mr. Merry communicated the substance of his dispatches to Count Florida Blanca, that minister mitigated the wrong which had been done, by declaring that he knew only of the seizure of one English ship; and, with respect to the right of Spain to the possession of that part of the continent, he intimated that it might be possible in this, as had happened in other cases, for the two courts to establish limits by a convention, which would prevent such misunderstandings in future; but he repeated his apprehensions that our real object in this business might be of a more extensive nature. To dispel this suspicion, Mr. Merry read to him a secret and confidential dispatch from the Duke of Leeds. The Count said he was endeavouring to get all commercial disagreement arranged; and added, that the military preparations had principally been occasioned by the fear of disturbances in their colonies; although he allowed that some augmentation of the force had taken place in consequence of the existing dispute.

Appearance
of a pacific
disposition.

The conferences for some time assumed an aspect which led the English minister to declare it almost incredible that the Spanish court could really intend a rupture.

Altered con-
duct of Spain.

June 10.

Soon, however, Mr. Merry experienced a great change in the tone of Florida Blanca: he now said he was persuaded the English had, at all events, taken the resolution of breaking with Spain: his Majesty's message to Parliament was almost equivalent to a declaration of war: our intention was shewn by the

advices dispatched to all our settlements abroad: the tone of England toward Spain was insufferable; and, although he wished to preserve peace, he thought his country would unavoidably be driven to the necessity of defending herself. Measures were accordingly taken for increasing the military force, and a loan of about four millions sterling negotiated with the bankers of Madrid.

In answer to the English memorial, the King of Spain limited his claim of territory to those settlements which might belong to his crown by solemn treaties, or by right grounded on them, or on the consent of nations, and by a well-proved immemorial possession, and, reserving the question of right for future discussion, proposed a reciprocal disarmament.

This change in the temper of the Spanish court was attributed, and not without apparent reason, to a confidence in the assistance of France. After a short interval, Mr. Fitzherbert reached Madrid. He lost no time in making communications and seeking explanations, and urged Florida Blanca to make explicit declarations. The Count declined giving the satisfaction required as a preliminary; and the effect of his behaviour at a conference convinced Mr. Fitzherbert that the Catholic King and his ministers were entirely bent on war, although they refrained from commencing hostilities, on a presumption that their persisting in their refusal of satisfaction would impel England to make reprisals, and give them a right to demand the assistance of France.

When these expectations were disappointed, the Spanish monarch consented to make the declaration, and afford the satisfaction required, if explanations might be subjoined to the declaration in one of three forms which were proposed. They all left the dispute to reference, or further inquiry into facts.

Although these proposals were obviously inadmissible, still it appeared that a disposition to avoid hostilities was now prevailing in the Spanish cabinet. The source of this change was not exactly known; it might exist in the state of French politics, in financial

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4th.
15th.
Answer to the
English me-
morial

Arrival of
Mr. Fitz-
herbert.

9th.

16th—26th.

19—29.
Adjustment
proposed by
Spain.

Supposed
causes of
change.

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difficulties, or in domestic causes ; and whether it were a mere coincidence, or had some connexion with affairs in agitation, is unknown ; but the public feeling in Spain was much excited by an attempt to murder Count Florida Blanca. The assassin was a Frenchman named Perez ; and, when apprehended, he endeavoured to destroy himself.

July 5.
Proposals from
England.

A memorial was forwarded to Mr. Fitzherbert, containing a proposed declaration and counter-declaration, in which full satisfaction and atonement to England were to be made, while all just rights of Spain should be respected. The proposal to disarm, pending a negotiation, was absolutely refused.

Terms offered
by Spain.

10th.

After a debate of some days, Mr. Fitzherbert, by appointment, met Florida Blanca at his office, when the Count offered unjust and extravagant terms, which were promptly rejected. Spain claimed exclusive possession of the whole coast of North-west America, from California up to and including the port of Nootka. A very limited right of trading and forming establishments was conceded to Great Britain ; and, from latitude 56 downwards, this right should not extend beyond a certain number of leagues inland, in order to avoid interference with the Spanish mission. The right of fishing in the South Sea and Megellanic region, together with that of landing and erecting occasional buildings in such unsettled islands or parts of the coast as should be agreed upon, was so restrained and limited as to be of little value ; and as, by means of such an arrangement, the two crowns would avoid all discussion of rights, they should also agree to waive their mutual demand of satisfaction ; in which case, Spain would pay to the proprietors of ships taken at Nootka the full amount of their loss.

25th.
August 5.
Rejected.

The terms
proposed by
England
accepted.

After this offer had been declared inadmissible, a long interval of suspense ensued ; when, at length, a dispatch from Mr. Fitzherbert brought the pleasing intelligence that the declaration and counter-declaration before proposed had been signed and exchanged. The delay which had intervened shewed the difficulty of effecting an arrangement ; in fact, not only the sub-

stance, but the form of words, was the subject of great discussion, and a full concession was slowly and laboriously obtained.

A pacific disposition in the Spanish court seems to have been powerfully stimulated by the conduct of the United States of America; for, in consequence of some encroachments made by the governor of West Florida, the American chargé d'affaires at Madrid was directed, not only to complain, but to give notice that, on a delay of redress, the inhabitants of those districts would proceed to do themselves justice by force of arms*.

Mr. Fitzherbert also received from the Spanish minister Captain Colnett's letter, declaring that his vessel, himself and crew, had been released, and that he had a full expectation of being indemnified for all his losses; and Mr. Fitzherbert was assured that orders had been sent to Mexico for putting M. Martinez under arrest, to answer for his unwarrantable conduct. The other vessels were in like manner released; and the Chinese who had accompanied the British company to Nootka, and who had been sent by the Spaniards to work in their mines, were also set at liberty.

Negotiations for a definitive arrangement proceeded in the usual routine of projets and contre-projets, claims, objections and replies, containing matter, which, when the point of honour between the nations was settled, can afford little interest in the recapitulation. France made a shew of inclination to throw her weight into the scale; but that interference was too late to produce effect. M. de Montmorin informed the National Assembly, that, as England was augmenting her armament, a similar effort should be made by France, and communicated to them a letter from the Spanish ambassador, dated the 16th of June, claiming the speedy and exact performance of the treaty called the family compact. On the report of the diplomatic Committee, to whom this affair was referred, the Assembly decreed that they would abide by the defensive and commercial engagements which the

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Spain has a
dispute with
America.

Pacific acts of
Spain.

Progress of
negotiation.

Conduct of
France.

August 2.

* Marshall's Life of Washington, vol. v. p. 237.

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government had contracted with Spain : that the King should be desired to order his ambassador to negotiate with the ministers of the Catholic King, in order to strengthen, by a national treaty, those ties which were useful to both countries, and to fix, with precision and clearness, such stipulations as might not be entirely conformable to the views of general peace, and to the principles of justice, which should always be the policy of the French ; and that, on a consideration of the armaments of the different nations of Europe, and their progressive increase, and of the security of the French colonies and commerce, the King should be desired to order into commission forty-five ships of the line, with a proportionable number of frigates and small vessels.

August.
September.
October.

Discussions and communications followed, in which the French always professed their desire of peace, yet always continued arming, and sent out three frigates to Tobago ; while England, professing always the utmost good-will toward France, insisted that her proceedings in the matter in dispute were so consistent with justice and the law of nations, that France could not arm in the cause without a manifest disregard of both. At one period, the French, as if engaged in some private negotiation, or watching the current of events, intermitted the correspondence for nearly a month, and, at last, the silence was feebly and evasively justified.

Of Holland.

In this period, the States-general of the United Provinces promptly manifested their disposition to fulfil the conditions of their alliance with this country, by earnestly and liberally advancing their preparations for our assistance. The squadron of six sail of the line and four frigates, which had before been fitted out, sailed for Portsmouth, under the command of Admiral Kingsbergen ; and orders were given, and funds provided, for arming six additional ships, if necessary.

July.

October 2.
New aggres-
sion of Spain.

Another cause of difference, arising from the unjustifiable conduct of a Spanish officer toward the captain of a British West Indiaman, in the gulph of Florida, was speedily and properly adjusted. The ship

Trelawney planters, commanded by Captain Macdonald, was boarded and seized by Don Juan Vincente Yanez, commanding the frigate Nuestra Senora del Rosario, and, without the colour of a pretence, the British captain was put in the bilboes, in a scorching sun, and treated with so much cruelty, that even the Spanish crew compassionated and used their utmost endeavours to alleviate his sufferings. On this subject, immediate satisfaction was afforded; for the Spanish minister stated, that Yanez, on his arrival at Cadiz, had, on his own relation of the affair, in a dispatch to the minister of the marine, been immediately put under an arrest, and ordered to undergo the judgment of a court martial.

In this interval, Mr. Fitzherbert, still imagining that he perceived a hostile disposition in the Spanish minister, sent letters to Gibraltar, and to the consuls in the Spanish ports, recommending the continuance of measures of precaution; yet, in a fortnight, the difficulties attending the final arrangement were surmounted, and a pacific convention was signed and ratified.

By this treaty, Spain agreed to restore the disputed buildings and tract of land, and to make reparation for all subsequent acts of violence*. The right of navigating and fishing in the Pacific ocean, and of landing and making settlements for carrying on commerce, was equally secured to both nations; but, as British subjects were not to make the navigation and fishery a pretext for carrying on an illicit trade with the Spanish settlements, they must not approach within ten sea leagues of any part of the coast occupied by the Spaniards. The subjects of both countries had equal liberty to trade at Nootka, and in all parts of the North-west coast of America and the islands adjacent, situated to the northward of the territories already occupied by Spain. No settlement to be made by either nation on the east or west coasts of South America to the southward of those already effected by

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Cautious proceedings of Mr. Fitzherbert.

Differences arranged.

28th.

Convention.

* This reparation was afterward fixed at two hundred and ten thousand dollars, beside the restitutions.

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Observations.

Spain ; both nations might land and erect temporary huts for purposes connected with their fisheries ; and, should an infraction of this convention occur, no violence was to be committed, but representations to be made for the purpose of amicable adjustment*.

Thus honourably was terminated a dispute so apparently pregnant with disastrous consequences. The rights of the British crown were firmly vindicated, and the wrongs of British subjects amply redressed. It is not to be maintained, that the trade or territory which formed the object of discussion was, in money, worth the expense it occasioned† ; but, if such an argument could be generally applied, the duty of maintaining national rights would be at an end. No external possession, no claim of a commercial nature, is worth the cost of hostile maintenance ; but miserable indeed must be the condition of that country which will not arm and combat to extremity, rather than submit to arbitrary restraint, or wanton spoliation. The nation which can basely surrender its outworks, may reasonably tremble for its citadel‡.

* See " Strictures " on the Spanish Declaration, and Letters on the present Dispute with Spain, under the signature Verus.

† Many writers and speakers have expressed their sentiments on this point. See particularly Macpherson's *Annals of Commerce*, vol. iv. p. 200.

‡ It may be mentioned here, that in 1795 this territory was formally taken possession of by Lieutenant Pierce, of the British navy, and received the name of King George's Sound. I have consulted generally the histories and periodical works relating to the period, but have principally followed one before referred to, " A Narrative of the Negotiations occasioned by the Dispute between England and Spain in the year 1790." This book is not published by any bookseller, nor does the name of any author or compiler appear ; but from the exactness with which official documents are referred to, it seems to have been prepared by order of government for the information of foreign courts.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-EIGHTH.

1789—1790.

War of Russia and Austria against the Turks.—State of the Emperor.—Death of the Sultan Abdoul Hamed—first measures of his successor.—Junction of the Austrians and Russians—battle of Rimnick.—Progress of Marshal Loudon.—Siege and capture of Belgrade—further successes—armistice.—War between Russia and Sweden—sea fight off Bornholm—engagements by land and sea.—Ill success of the Swedes—turn in their affairs. Peace with Russia.—Struggle in the Netherlands—proceedings of the Emperor—resistance—increasing troubles of the Emperor—Hungary—his concessions—and death.—Accession of Leopold the Second.—Intrigues of Prussia.—Prudent and conciliatory conduct of Leopold—he quiets troubles and arranges disputes.—Affairs of France—state of the National Assembly—influence of the Jacobin club—emigration—proceedings of the Chatelet—the National Assembly in Paris—famine—riots—law against tumults—extent of changes—new division of the kingdom—abolition of the Parliaments—new tribunals—sale of judicial appointments prohibited—lettres de cachet abolished—other reforms in criminal laws—hereditary titles, armorial bearings, and liveries forbidden—declaration of the King—the red book—civil list—other retrenchments of prerogative—property of the clergy seized—suppression of monasteries—frequent riots in the departments—general toleration—further beneficial reforms—other proceedings—procession of the human race—confederation—observations—the fédérés—finances—assignats issued—decline of Necker's influence—his retreat.

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War of Russia
and Austria
against the
Turks.

FROM a war which was threatened and prepared for, but never begun, we turn to one, conducted with great fury and prodigious desolation; that which was waged by Russia and Austria against the Turks. Had hostilities between England and Spain taken place, all Europe would probably have been involved; but those which did exist, occasioned no forwardness to participate or interfere. However they might be affected by its ultimate results, and every kingdom in Europe must be affected in some degree by the dismemberment or annihilation of any considerable state, England, France, and Spain did not appear as parties or mediators, but awaited the course of events to regulate their conduct.

State of the
Emperor.

Broken in health, irritated and dispirited by ill success in his late campaign, Joseph retired to Vienna, calculating the gain of a few fortresses against the cost of a year's warfare and the sacrifice of thirty thousand men, who had fallen in desultory conflicts, and forty thousand swept away by pestilence and disease. Flattery imputed the blame to Lacy; and the Marshal, either from a generous unwillingness to add to the afflictions of his sovereign, or from a high refinement in the art of a courtier, appeared to acquiesce; but the Emperor could not deceive himself; he had reaped neither advantage nor popularity from his exertions; he had submitted, even with frivolous minuteness, to the wants and difficulties which beset the common soldiers, without acquiring their love or their respect; and, at last, his pride could only find a feeble solace by referring the cause of his misadventures to the tardiness of the Russians.

1789.

April 7th.
Death of the
Sultan.

First measures
of his
successor.

No relaxation took place in the efforts to prosecute hostilities; and the success of the ensuing campaign was not diminished, if it was not caused, by the absence of the Emperor. To the great misfortune of the Turks, the Sultan Abdoul Hamed died, and his successor, Selim the Third, gave an unfavourable omen of his future measures, by displacing from the command of his armies the brave and enterprizing Grand Vizier, and appointing in his stead the Pacha of Widdin, a

man of totally different character. Eager to anticipate the enemy, the Grand Vizer had crossed the Danube at Ruschuk, with ninety thousand men, intending to penetrate into Transylvania, and carry the war into the hereditary dominions of Austria; but at this moment he was not only recalled, but disgraced, banished, and assassinated on his way to the place of exile.

In consequence of this change, the allies soon recovered their ascendancy. The Prince of Saxe Cobourg, with eighteen thousand men, marched from Chotzim to Adjud to effect a junction with Suwarow, and seven thousand Russians. A large body of Turks had advanced from Brachilow to prevent this operation; but the united generals defeated them at Fotzain, with the loss of their camp, baggage, magazines, and artillery.

The Austrian army being augmented to thirty thousand men, a combined attack was made on the Turks, whose force amounted to one hundred thousand. They were posted near the little river Rimnick; and the Austrians, being the first to engage, found themselves pressed by superior numbers; but Suwarow arriving, made an irresistibly impetuous charge, and the Austrians emulating his example, the Turkish army was routed, and thrown into irreparable confusion. Both generals received high honours and splendid rewards from their grateful sovereigns; nor were pecuniary gratifications withheld from the officers and soldiers, and Suwarow acquired the honorary surname of Rimnickski.

Loudon, who had commenced the campaign with the capture of Berbir, was soon intrusted with the command of the principal army, recovered, during a new armistice, from its fatigues and losses. He hastened to Semlin, leaving Clerfaye at Meadia, to cover the Bannat, invested Belgrade, and, vigorously pressing the siege, carried the suburbs by assault. The Governor proposing an armistice for fifteen days, Loudon briefly replied, "Not for fifteen hours," ordered the cannonade to be resumed with redoubled vigour, and within three days the garrison of seven thousand men sur-

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1789.
March.

Junction of the
Austrians and
Russians.

Battle of
Rimnick.

Sept. 20th.

Progress of
Marshal
Loudon
July 9th.

August 14th.
Sept. 3rd.
Siege and
capture of
Belgrade.
30th.
October 6th.

October 9th.

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Further
successes

rendered prisoners of war. Joseph, although sinking under the disorder which carried him to the grave, rose from his bed to attend a *Te Deum*; the success of his arms was celebrated with festivals and illuminations, and the victorious Commander was nominated *generalissimo*, with the same uncontrolled authority which had been formerly intrusted to Prince Eugene.

After the victory of Rimnick and the capture of Belgrade, Hassan Pacha, the Turkish high admiral and conqueror of Egypt, whose confidence in his good fortune had encouraged him to assume the command of an army, was totally defeated at Tobac, in Bessarabia, by Prince Potemkin; and his discomfiture was followed by the surrender of Bender, Akerman, Kilia Nova, and Isatza, and the investment of Ismael. At the same time, the Prince of Cobourgh took Bucharest and Hohenlohe, forcing the passes which led into Wallachia, made himself master of Rimnick and Crajova. Loudon also reduced Semendria and Cladova, and blockaded Orsova, which, being situated in an island of the Danube, was inaccessible to regular attacks. By these conquests the allies became masters of the whole line of fortresses which covered the Turkish frontiers; the three grand armies, originally separated by a vast extent of country, were rapidly converging to the same point, and threatened by their united force to overbear all opposition, and, in another campaign, to complete the subversion of the Ottoman empire in Europe.

Armistice.

From this period a cessation of hostilities took place, which lasted until the autumn of the following year; Russia and Austria had occasion to exert their efforts in other quarters.

1789.

August 26th.
War between
Russia and
Sweden.

In the conflict between Russia and Sweden, operations were begun at sea*. When the weather permitted, the hostile squadron sailed; but, for a long time, manœuvred to avoid a general engagement. Tchitchagoff commanded the Russian, Lilienhorn the

* Castéra, vol. iii. p. 57, gives an account of a treacherous attempt to burn the Austrian fleet, in the harbour of Copenhagen, and of its failure.

Swedish force. A great want of skill was shewn on both sides; but the Russians, having the assistance and advice of two British officers named Preston and Thesiger, were triumphant near Bornholm; and, subsequently, under the command of the Prince of Nassau-Singen and Admiral Winter, they surprised and destroyed a Swedish flotilla of galleys and gun-boats, near Rosjensalem: the brave Admiral Winter fell in the action.

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1789.

Sea fight off
Bornholm.

While this conflict was maintained, the Russians attacked the Swedish army near Fredericksheim, and expelled them from Russian Finland. Gustavus again essayed to penetrate into the dominions of the Empress, but was defeated, with great loss, by General Numsen, at Arborfors. Still undismayed, he re embarked on board his small fleet, took twenty-three vessels from the Prince of Nassau, landed some battalions of infantry and squadrons of light troops within five miles of Petersburg, and took the important post of Pardakoffsky. Although terror again pervaded the capital, Catherine, who was at Tzarsko-zelo, without interrupting her party of pleasure, transmitted the necessary orders, in pursuance of which, the Prince of Anhalt, with eight thousand men, advanced to dislodge two thousand Swedes. In a fierce assault, the Russians lost half their troops; but, when they were preparing, with an overwhelming force, to renew the attack, the Swedes, favoured by a thaw, retreated in safety.

Engagements
by land,

and sea.

1790.

May 12th.

The Duke of Sudermania, commanding the grand Swedish fleet of twenty-six ships of the line, rashly engaged the Russian squadron in the very port of Reval, and sacrificed two of his vessels, one being captured and the other burnt to avoid the same fate. They next committed a still greater act of imprudence, by collecting their whole force, including their gun-boats, in the gulf of Vibourg, where they were blockaded. Pressed by want of provisions, they sought to escape, by breaking through the hostile squadron. A fire-ship, which was sent to clear the passage, grounded and damaged the Swedish instead of the adverse fleet; and, in the result, nine ships of the line, three frigates, and

Ill success of
the Swedes
at sea.

July 9th.

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They gain a
victory.Peace between
Russia and
Sweden.

August 14th.

Struggle in the
Netherlands.

upwards of twenty galleys were captured. Thus apparently ruined, the Swedes retired behind the rocks of Schwenksund, where they were attacked by the Prince of Nassau, but in a manner so unskilful and unadvised, that he was defeated, with the loss of all his fleet and more than ten thousand men.

These various turns of fortune convinced Gustavus that he could gain nothing by war; he could not make an effectual diversion for the Turks, and, at home, his ruin seemed rather suspended than effectually averted. Gladly, therefore, he accepted the mediation of Galvez, the Spanish minister at Petersburg, and speedily concluded a peace, on terms conformable with former treaties, and an oblivion of all recent causes of offence*.

While the exertions of Catherine against the Turks were impeded by this conflict, the Emperor was deprived of the means of prosecuting hostilities, by the necessity of making military preparations to control a portion of his own subjects, who were in a state of revolt.

The Netherlands, or Low-countries, had been ceded to the House of Austria at the peace of Utrecht†, under an express stipulation that their ancient laws, customs, and constitutions should be inviolably preserved; and Joseph, like all his predecessors, had, on his accession to the hereditary dominions, acknowledged the obligation. Perhaps no country so small in extent, under the government of one prince, displayed in its component parts such glaring differences in manners, government, and laws. The provinces were Brabant, Limburgh, Luxemburgh, Flanders, Hainault, Namur, Guelderland, and Mechlin. Antwerp and Tournay, from the circumstances attending their incorporation with the dominions of Austria, were governed by laws which the French had established; and, consequently, the provinces were sometimes reckoned

* These facts are principally derived, and sometimes in his very words, from Archdeacon Coxe, *History of the House of Austria*, vol. ii. c. 49; and from Castéra, *Histoire de Catharine II.* tom. iii. p. 56. See also Lacretelle, tom. viii. p. 151.

† 12th of April, 1713.

nine and sometimes ten. All the provinces, and even some cities and towns, had separate constitutions; to trace the varieties of which would be tedious and useless; but so highly were they estimated by the people, that, in the charter granted to Brabant, it was declared that, when the Sovereign should cease to observe the articles, his subjects should also cease to obey him; and he was acknowledged in each, according to its ancient forms, by a different title: thus he was Duke of Brabant, Luxemburgh, and Guelderland, Count of Flanders, Hainault, and Namur, and Lord of Mechlin and Tournay. In each province was a separate representative body, magistracy, and clergy. The people were industrious, thriving, and contented; the territory, containing two millions of inhabitants, formed a connecting link between the hereditary dominions and the maritime powers; and, since the loss of Alsace, it formed the great bulwark against the encroachments of France.

On this valuable and happy country, on this race of men, so tenacious of their ancient constitutions and customs, Joseph let loose the torrent of experimental reform. He attempted to force on this portion of his subjects what he called an efficient and simple form of government; the system of ecclesiastical polity, finance, and jurisprudence, which he had introduced into his hereditary dominions. He abolished several convents, prohibiting processions, jubilees, and confraternities, and removed statues, images, and offerings from the churches. He reformed the system of public education, by abrogating the privileges of the University of Louvain, and instituting a seminary for the study of theology, over which he placed foreigners as directors, independent of the controul of the bishops, and at which he ordered all youths destined for the church to pursue their studies. He suppressed the permanent committee of deputies appointed to act during the vacations of the states, abolished all the councils and courts of justice, and established the same gradation of tribunals as in other Austrian territories. Finally, he declared the Netherlands one province of the Austrian

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dominions, and divided the whole territory into nine circles or intendencies.

Several other acts of oppression contributed to exasperate the people; the clergy and laity made common cause; in Brabant, the grant of customary subsidies was refused; the collectors were forbidden to levy the taxes under the new system, and the other states, readily obeying the call to unite in resistance, took up arms. It was the intelligence of these events, which, as mentioned in a former page*, obliged Joseph to leave Catherine on the journey to Cherson.

Proceedings of
the Emperor.

On his return to Vienna, the Emperor first endeavoured to intimidate the insurgents by threats too obviously impotent to alarm, and, afterwards, by fallacies too grossly palpable to deceive. His fair promises produced a temporary calm; but the accumulation of troops, the individuals to whom the command of them and the government of the provinces were entrusted, convinced the people that, unless secured by their own valour and vigilance, their rights would be lost for ever. Acts of injustice and oppression were repeated at every opportunity, and resisted in the principal states with unabated firmness, both in the legal assemblies of deputies and in tumultuary meetings of the people. The grant of subsidies was refused, even when the colleges were arbitrarily shut up, the professors banished, the deliberative bodies menaced, and military execution done on the populace. As the means of pacification, Joseph had granted an amnesty to those engaged in the late riots; but, irritated at the perseverance with which subsidies were refused, he threatened to revoke the amnesty, to prosecute all delinquents, to annul their privileges, and abolish that particular charter called the *Joyeuse Entrée*, on which they were principally founded†. In vain did the States of Brabant seek, by a petition, to avert the anger of their sovereign: he had already declared that the flame of rebellion could only be extinguished with blood; he

Resistance.

1789.
Jan. 26th.

31st.

* Chap. 62. p. 284.

† This great charter is so called, because it was promulgated on the entry of Philip the Good into Brussels.

had, by the hand of the military, dissolved the States of Hainault; and, convoking an extraordinary meeting with those of Brabant, required their concurrence in the proposition for increasing the third order, and establishing a permanent subsidy; he also enjoined them to approve all the imperial edicts, which were not contrary to the *Joyeuse Entrée*; and, to extort submission, the House of Assembly was surrounded with troops. The deputies, however, steadily and unanimously refused their consent, exclaiming, "Although the Emperor may dissolve us, we will not violate a constitution which we have solemnly pledged ourselves to preserve." In consequence, the edict was enforced, the Assembly dissolved, and the *Joyeuse Entrée* annulled. The deputies protested; but their protests were disregarded, and, on the ensuing morning, three imperial edicts proclaimed the dissolution of the ancient constitution, the new arrangement for the administration of justice, and various alterations in the imposition and collection of taxes.

If the example of France was lost on the Emperor when he undertook this unwise and ungracious course of proceeding, it was not forgotten by his oppressed subjects. Although restrained by the presence of the military, the citizens privately exhorted and animated each other; a national cockade was established; and the walls of houses, churches, and public buildings were covered with placards invoking unanimity and denouncing vengeance. As if struck by Providence with mental blindness, General D'Alton, the Commander of the Imperial forces, treated these alarming symptoms with contempt. Trautsmansdorf, who had been appointed the Emperor's minister plenipotentiary, and whose temper and prudence had before averted danger, aware that the commotions were fomented by France, Prussia, and the leading members of the Dutch government, and that the Imperial troops scarcely amounted to twenty thousand, requested an addition of force; but D'Alton ridiculed his apprehensions, affirming that, if he were to send a battalion from each regiment to the army in Hungary, he should

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still be able to maintain internal tranquillity; and the Emperor reluctantly dispatched a single regiment, "not," as he said, "because it was necessary, but to encourage a timid government." This overweening confidence, the worst fault of a sovereign in times of trouble, soon met its appropriate reward. Scarcely a month elapsed after the dissolution of the ancient constitution, before the people tumultuously rose, in various districts, released the persons arrested, attacked the military, and plundered the houses of the magistrates. In these commotions many lives were lost at Tirlemont, Louvain, Antwerp, and Mons, before tranquillity could be restored; and at Diest, the patriots, led on by the monks, expelled the Imperial troops and the magistrates. Brussels being likewise the scene of a momentary effervescence, the minister proposed to disarm the citizens; but this measure was rejected by D'Alton, who, presuming on the force of military discipline, contemptuously exclaimed, "If they want arms, I will supply them."

Emigrations now took place from all quarters, and the fugitives, assembling on the frontiers of Holland and Liege, and gaining great accessions, soon formed a powerful body, and placed themselves under the guidance of Vander Noot, a lawyer, who assumed the title of Plenipotentiary agent of the people of Brabant; and Vander Merish, an officer who, having served in the seven years' war, was now appointed Commander-in-chief. Vander Noot issued a bold manifesto in the name of the clergy and third estate of Brabant, in union with many of the nobility, renouncing their allegiance, and declaring that they no longer considered Joseph as their sovereign.

This declaration of war, for such in effect it was, aroused the Imperial Governor; he caused it to be burnt by the hands of the executioner, and published a long vindication of the Emperor. Many persons of the highest respectability in Brussels were arrested on a charge of conspiracy; the gates were shut, pallisades planted on the fortifications, the citizens disarmed, and active preparations made for defence. Nor, on

their part, were the patriots idle. A body, marching from the neighbourhood of Breda, surprised the forts of Lillo and Liefgenshoek, on the Scheldt, made the scanty garrisons prisoners, and conveyed the guardship and artillery to Bergen op Zoom. Another body of three thousand men, under the command of Vander Mersch, penetrated to Turnhout, and although many were armed only with bludgeons, pitchforks and staves, and without cannon, they repulsed the Imperial General Schroeder, who attacked them with fifteen hundred men. The monks proclaimed this victory a miracle; but, as even monkish miracles cannot always be relied on, the patriots, on the approach of General d'Arberg, with seven thousand men, concealed their arms, and sought refuge in Dutch Brabant.

On the other side of Flanders, a body, dispatched by Vander Mersch, surprised Ghent, where they were joined by the burghers with cannon and ammunition. Bruges and Courtray declared for the insurgents, and the States, assembling at Ghent, declared Flanders independent, and invited the other provinces to form a general alliance. Vander Mersch, immediately assembling a body of insurgents, invaded Brabant, seized Diest, and, advancing to Tirlemont, threatened Louvain. Astonished and confounded, the imperial chiefs acted without plan, and without unanimity. Trautmansdorf liberated the imprisoned patriots, restored the arms which had been taken from the citizens, and issued two-and-twenty separate proclamations, retracting measures which had given offence, and endeavouring to conciliate by fair promises. But the time for conciliation or coercion was equally past. D'Alton marched to meet the insurgents in the field; but, awed by their strength, and alarmed at his own critical position, he agreed to an armistice for ten days. His opponents judiciously prevented him from sending succours to Brussels, where a decisive insurrection was organized. There the women and children assailed the entrenchments and tore up the pallisadoes. The people assumed the national cockade, the streets resounded with the cries of "long live the patriots! long

Nov. 13th.—
17th.

8th. Dec.

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11th

“live Vander Noot !” The soldiers also began to desert, and two companies of the regiment of Murray joined the patriots. A few days afterward, an officer imprudently attempting to snatch a cockade from the hat of a burgher, a tumult ensued ; the inhabitants flew to arms ; the Imperial troops, separated and discouraged, were attacked by different bands of the populace, assisted by the deserters, and, after a conflict, which continued the greater part of the night, were driven into the upper town. D’Alton, fallen from his former presumption, dreading the approach of Vander Mersch on one side, and the Flemish army on the other ; doubtful of his troops, who were reduced to five thousand men ; surrounded by secret and declared enemies ; was happy to secure his retreat by a capitulation. He quitted Brussels, leaving the cannon, military chest, and stores in the hands of the insurgents, and took the route to Luxemburgh, pillaging, plundering, and wasting the country as he passed. The example of the capital was followed by other towns ; the Imperial troops successively retired from Antwerp, Louvain, and Mechlin, into Luxemburgh ; and the governor, General Bender, assuming the command, prepared to defend that duchy, which alone continued faithful to the house of Austria.

12th.

26th.

Trautmansdorf having withdrawn at the time of the capitulation, the government was dissolved, and, after a few days, the insurgents from Breda entered the capital in triumph. The States of Brabant assumed the sovereign power, and declared themselves independent. Their example was followed by the states of the other provinces ; a federal union was concluded, by which the Netherlands were moulded into a confederacy, under the title of the United Belgic States, and a Congress of Deputies appointed to conduct the affairs of the new government.

Oct. to Dec.
Increasing
troubles of the
Emperor.

Hungary.

With these fatal tidings, Joseph received intelligence of troubles in his Hungarian dominions, where discontent was carried to the extent of revolt, in consequence of the severities used in enforcing the military levies, and exacting contributions for the army. The

nobles remonstrated in a tone of characteristic haughtiness; demanded the confirmation of their rights, the permission to resume their national dress, and the revival of their native language in the acts and records of the kingdom. A domestic feud, occasioned by his unwise attempt to secure for his nephew, the Archduke Francis, the succession to the imperial throne, in preference to Leopold, his own brother, and father of Francis, deprived him of the confidence, council, and friendship, of his brother; while his mind was further troubled by apprehension of a war with Prussia. For a time, he appeared to sink under these accumulated misfortunes; he neither formed magazines, nor made the necessary augmentations of the army; equally unable to avert, and unwilling to encounter, the danger, he displayed the extremes of anxiety, alarm, and irresolution. But as the storm approached, his mind regained a portion of its pristine activity, and he commenced preparations for hostilities. He felt also the necessity of conciliating his subjects, to frustrate the designs of Prussia, which were founded on their growing disaffection; and yielded to the irresistible conviction, that nothing less than a total change of measures could preserve his tottering throne. He accordingly revoked many of his unpopular edicts, and prepared to rescind many others; he re-established the provincial states, and exhorted them to employ their authority in support of law and good order. He received the haughty demands of the Hungarians with condescension and complacency, restored their constitution as it existed at his accession, promised to solemnize the ceremony of his coronation early in the ensuing year, and, as an earnest of his intentions, sent back the crown of Saint Stephen. The rapture with which it was received proved the precipitation and folly of wantonly shocking the feelings of a people so susceptible of national prejudice, and so awake to national honour. Triumphal arches were erected in its passage; at Buda, exulting multitudes crowded the cathedral, to welcome the precious palladium of their national

Feb.

His concession.

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Death of the
Emperor
Joseph.

Feb. 20th.

Accession of
Leopold II.Intrigues of
Prussia.

splendour and freedom ; it was placed in the chapel of the palace, and guarded by two magistrates with drawn sabres ; the city was illuminated, and the streets resounded with songs of joy and exultation.

But Joseph did not live to witness the effects of his tardy wisdom. Aware of the approach of death, yet retaining his wonted activity, without his characteristic irritability, he employed his last days in issuing prudent and patriotic directions to his generals and counsellors. His death was accelerated by that of his beloved niece Elizabeth, the consort of his favourite nephew Francis, whose dissolution was also occasioned by her anxiety for him, while in a state of advanced pregnancy. He expired with great composure, in full profession of the faith of a Christian.

Most gloomy and depressing was the aspect of public affairs at the accession of the new sovereign, Leopold the Second. An exhausted treasury and an extensive war, uncertain friends, and manifest enemies crowded on his observation. The apparent loss of the Low-countries was rendered more distressing by the declared resolution of the Hungarians to sever themselves from his dominion. A land tax, unconstitutionally imposed, formed the ground of their complaint ; their discontent was inflamed by the haughty manner in which Joseph had repelled their remonstrances ; and the nobles seemed to have caught the spirit of the times, when they resolved that, the late Emperor not having been crowned, no succession could be derived to Leopold through him, and added that they did not want an Austrian king. These sentiments, as well as the troubles in Brabant, were known to be fostered and aided by Prussia, who, jealous of the aggrandizement intended to accrue to the house of Austria from the spoils of Turkey, had strengthened her connexion with England and the maritime states, and was endeavouring also to increase her power by obtaining from Poland the dominion of Dantzic and Thorn, in exchange for a less valuable territory. In consequence of treaties judiciously framed, and the gene-

ral position of public affairs, she could rely on the co-operation of England and Holland, whose impulse would be obeyed by Sweden and Poland.

To encounter all these difficulties, Leopold had no resource but in himself. Russia was too deeply engaged in war with the Porte, and in projects on Poland, to risk a disagreement with Prussia and the maritime powers; and France, if she had been inclined, was really unable to afford assistance; indeed, considering the system which prevailed, the quiescence of that power was highly favourable to any regular government, or to any sovereign opposed by his people. Nor were any great expectations formed of the new Emperor. He had governed Tuscany with vigour and prudence; but it was not believed that he was equal to the mighty and extended dominion which had fallen to him, or that it was within the compass of his faculties to compress the factions and allay the discords which rendered his throne insecure. Violence on his part would be resisted with every probability of success, and a conciliatory course was likely to be considered as a mere specimen of Italian policy.

Leopold soon evinced a character and talents which dissipated all the fears of his friends, and crushed the expectations of his enemies. In his progress to Vienna, he won many hearts by the affability with which he received deputations who came to state grievances, and the frank and sensible manner in which he promised redress. On his arrival at Vienna, he restored some regulations at court, which, to the great dissatisfaction of the nobility, had been abolished by his predecessor; and, while he received most kindly all deputations charged with complaints, urged the parties to persist in the application of appropriate remedies, and expressed his anxious desire to establish the happiness and prosperity of all his subjects on a permanent basis. Such conduct removed apprehensions and gave rise to presages of a wise and benevolent reign.

His earliest efforts were to compose the discontents in the hereditary countries, to recover the Netherlands,

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Prudent and
conciliatory
conduct of
Leopold.

March 17th.

He quiets
troubles and

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settles
disputes.

to secure a speedy and honourable peace with the Turks, to effect a reconciliation with Prussia, and to obtain the imperial crown. By a negotiation with Prussia, in which he made his equity, good faith, and firmness equally apparent, he succeeded in gaining the promise of Frederick William to support his claims to the empire. By a convention, signed at Reichenbach, he obtained an armistice with the Turks, on condition that a negotiation for peace should be opened under the mediation of the maritime powers, on the basis of the status quo, and to give an equivalent to Prussia, should he obtain any advantage or acquisition from the Porte. He also engaged not to assist Russia, should the attempts to conclude a peace between her and the Porte fail of success; and he consented to restore to the Netherlands their ancient constitution and privileges, under the guaranty of the three allied powers. On the signature of this convention, the two armies withdrew from the frontiers: and, by the intervention of Prussia, an armistice was concluded with the Porte for nine months. A congress of plenipotentiaries from Austria, Turkey, and the mediating powers, was soon afterward assembled at Szistova, which seemed at first to promise great facilities to a final arrangement; but soon jarring interests and unforeseen combinations occasioned delay, and gave rise to protracted discussions. Hungary was quieted by reasonable concessions; and, with the support of Prussia, Leopold was elected and crowned Emperor of Germany*.

Affairs of
France.

In the transactions which agitated Europe, France did not, for the present, interfere actively, either by arms or by subsidies; but her influence was felt through the more effectual medium of public opinion. Sovereigns were affected by the diffusion of principles and the operation of examples, which, taking from them the surest source of authority, prevented their firm reliance on the affection and obe-

* Principally from Coxe's *House of Austria*, vol. ii. cc. 51, 52. See also *Mémoires tirées des Papiers d'un Homme d'État*, tom. i. p. 87; Ségur, *Histoire de Frédéric Guillaume II.* tom. ii. c. 8.

dience of their subjects. The people too, influenced by high sounding dogmas and fascinated by boastful pretensions, gratified with the example of greatness depressed, authority defied, learning despised, and establishments invaded, longed to try new experiments in the constitution of government, law, and religion.

In the National Assembly, the aim constantly pursued was to annihilate the authority of the crown, the rights of the nobility, and the existence of the clergy; to make the property of all these classes a prey to any party which, under the appellation of the nation, and by means of the populace of Paris, should gain ascendancy. Nor were there left any means of restraining them, while uncontrolled by any superior body, holding their king a prisoner, emancipating the army from all obligations of fidelity, and making loyalty a crime*.

It would be a mistake to say that even the National Assembly governed France. That assembly was ruled by the mob of Paris, and that mob was convoked, sustained, impelled, by the association called the Jacobin club. At the first meeting of the States-general, an union of some members and their friends was formed, under the title of the Breton club, because many of its original founders came from the province of Brittany. It increased in numbers daily; measures of government and all constitutional questions were unsparingly discussed; popular grievances were detailed and amplified, and the hatred of the nation was directed toward the King, the Queen, the princes of the blood, the nobility, the clergy, and all other bodies and individuals, as suited the interest, the malice, or the caprice of the popular advocates. Soon after the removal of the King to Paris, this club obtained possession of the building which had been the abode of a suppressed body of Franciscan monks, or Jacobins; they styled themselves the friends of liberty sitting at the hall of the Jacobins, and afterward, more shortly, Jacobins. They had affiliated corresponding societies, receiving instructions and impulse from them in all

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State of the
National
Assembly.

Influence of
the Jacobin
club.

* See Life of Gouverneur Morris, vol. ii. p. 88.

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parts of France, and established communications with the disaffected in foreign countries. In a short time, the term Jacobin was used as an appellation instead of patriot. The Jacobins domineered with fatal and sanguinary ascendancy: their favour assured safety and tranquillity; and expulsion from their body, or denunciation within their walls, amounted to a decree of banishment from all public intercourse, or, more frequently, to a sentence of death.

Emigration.

Immediately after his being brought to Paris, the King was obliged to dismiss his gardes-du-corps, who immediately emigrated. The same measure was adopted by many members of the Assembly, who could no longer bear to see the progress of events, teeming, as they thought, with the disgrace and ruin of their country. This proceeding, if founded on prudence, was not sanctioned by wisdom, nor crowned with success. Had they remained at home, and united in any prudent, defined, and practical system, they would have formed a powerful and influential body. When they had absented themselves, they soon found that their countrymen observed the proceeding with indifference; indifference was soon changed for hatred, and hatred was the harbinger of cruelty and injustice. In the legislature in particular, the loss of such men as Mounier, Lally-Tollendal, Bergasse, and La Luzerne, Bishop of Langres, was severely felt by the friends of order, government, truth, and justice; their absence was hailed by another party as the removal of an obstacle which delayed, if it could not finally prevent, the success of their attacks*.

Proceedings of
the Chatelet.

While the Assembly was yet detained at Versailles, by the want of a proper hall for their reception in Paris, inquiries were commenced on the causes of the transactions in October. Lafayette, conscious that it

* One of their body, M. Lally-Tollendal, wrote an able and eloquent defence of his conduct. He described the sufferings of the Royal Family, the rage expressed against the clergy, the fury of the mob of Paris, the encouragement it received in the Assembly, and the expressions and conduct of some of its members, as quite sufficient to justify him and others for resolving never more to set a foot in that den of anthropophagi. See *Défence des émigrés français*, par M. Lally-Tollendal.—Deboffe, London, 1797.

was his interest to avert inquiry from his own conduct, attacked the Duke of Orléans, and, without much difficulty, obliged him to leave the realm. He arrived in England, where he found no refuge from the contempt of the upright and the virtuous, but in the indulgences and the dissipations which his dilapidated fortunes still enabled him to enjoy. Accusations of different persons, and statements of alarming facts concerning the atrocities at Versailles, were daily received: they were referred at first to a committee, and afterward to the court of the Chatelet, with power to examine witnesses and report to the Assembly. Their labours were long, and their exertions diligent; among others, they interrogated the Queen, who at first declined answering, but, being pressed, made that celebrated and dignified reply, "I saw every thing, heard every thing, and have forgotten every thing."

The abode, or rather the prison, for such they soon found it, assigned to the royal family, was the old, unrepaired, blood-stained palace of the Louvre. The Assembly, having before declared themselves inseparable from the person of the King, decreed their own removal to Paris: they sat at first in the Archbishop's palace (l'évêché), but afterward removed to a hall prepared for them at the riding-house near the Tuilleries.

Plenty had, for a short period, seemed to be restored to the city, but famine soon re-appeared, and pressed with aggravated force. In their present condition, the King and his court could no longer be charged as causes of this calamity; and those who now governed the populace turned their fury against individuals, as forestallers of the markets and monopolizers of the first necessary of life; bakers, in particular, were the objects of vengeance. Two of these, who had been seized and sentenced, were rescued, on the very verge of destruction, by the national guard; but a third, named François, was murdered, with horrible barbarity, and his pregnant widow obliged to kiss his lips, when his head had been just severed from his trunk.

While this transaction was in progress, a motion was

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Oct. 13th.

22nd.

The National
Assembly in
Paris.

Oct. 19th.

Nov. 9th.

Famine in
Paris.

Oct. 21st.

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Law against
tumults.

made in the Assembly for a decree enabling the government, in certain cases, to proclaim martial law, and for constituting a tribunal to try offences against the nation; for, as the old and well-understood term *lèse majesté*, would have implied too much confidence in, and deference to, the King, the new description of *lèse nation* was framed. In opposition to this proposal, Robespierre and several other members made characteristic speeches; but, at length, it was decreed, that whenever the public peace should be endangered, the municipal officers of the commune were to give notice, by displaying a red flag from a window of the town-house and in the streets, that the military force would be called out. At this signal, all assemblies, armed or unarmed, were to be considered illegal, and immediately to disperse. The national guard was then to march, accompanied by one member, at least, of the municipal body, to demand of the people the cause of their being assembled; and, after certain citations and explanations, if they refused to disperse, the military were to fire. All crimes of *lèse nation* (but what they were was undefined) were left to the decision of the court of the Chatelet. In fact, this was now the only criminal tribunal in Paris. But the proceedings of a court, the slowness of which was always complained of when popular fury roared for victims, and which was never dreaded when popular delinquents stood at its bar, could not have much influence. Nor did the terrors of the new law produce much effect on a people whose cause was always defended by certain orators in the Assembly, whose motions were guided by instigators from the clubs which governed the legislature, and who, by their numbers and their clamour, could overawe the body by which they ought to have been controlled and governed. Far from enjoying tranquillity, Paris was in a state of constant alarm: protected by no fixed public law, every man was made to feel that his life and his property depended on a capricious decree, emanated without charge, defence, or trial. Houses of municipal officers, members of the parliaments, national guards, and private indi-

viduals were marked with chalks of different colours, menacing the owners with pillage, burning, and assassination. Fearless of consequences, mobs took into their own hands the whole administration of the law. Lafayette often interfered, with promptitude and spirit; and, on one occasion, not without great personal danger, suppressed an insurrection of five or six hundred regular troops who had mutinied. His never-failing courage on these occasions would form the theme of welcome and unreserved praise, but that the good effect of his conduct was frustrated by declarations, ostentatiously repeated in the Assembly, that when the people are oppressed, insurrection is the most sacred of duties; a highly seasoned axiom, well suited to the taste of those who clamour for rights, while they acknowledge no duties, consider all restraint of their vices as oppressive to their freedom, and are ever anxious for that state of irresistible violence which is comprized in the term insurrection*.

In effecting the great changes which were meditated, equal boldness and foresight were displayed; the alterations were not only great in themselves, but fraught with future consequences, and all prospect of a return to the ancient state of things was effectually excluded. Thus, upon a plan formed and perfected by the Abbé Sieyès, the whole kingdom was transformed. Provinces, principalities, counties, and all their subordinate arrangements, were abolished, never to return. For all purposes of representation and administration, the kingdom was divided into eighty-three departments, each containing a surface of about three hundred

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Extent of
changes.Oct. 30th.
New division
of the king-
dom.

* Some writers have endeavoured to redeem the character of Lafayette from the disgrace of this declaration, by affirming that he qualified it by expressions of a more tranquil tendency. One says that he added, "but the times are changed, and it is fit that order should revive." *Revue chronologique de l'Histoire de France*, p. 72. Another says that he added, "but under a free government, the most sacred of duties was obedience to the laws." *Sarrans, Lafayette et la Revolution de 1830*, tom. i. p. 24. The saying in question was too much repeated in all forms, from a patriotic declamation to a tavern toast, too much descanted on by all lovers of order for thirty years, to be now qualified, explained away, or rendered doubtful. But, even if the phrases contended for could be added to the sentence, it is hardly to be supposed that minds intoxicated with the alcohol administered in the first member of the sentence, could be sobered by the mere water tendered in the second.

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and twenty-four square leagues, that is, eighteen by eighteen. Each department was formed into districts, not less than three, nor exceeding nine: these again were parcelled into cantons of four leagues square. The plan, although decreed, could not be effected at once; but, after much deliberation, it received a final sanction; and, under new names, and with new rights and new connexions, all the people throughout France were newly associated. Thus all local recollections, all historical records tending to endear to man the particular spot where his first affections had been fixed, his first emotions of proud public spirit excited, were utterly obliterated*.

November 3.

The destruction of the parliaments was pursued without much resistance, and without any popular sensation: they had renounced the means of protecting themselves, had put it out of the King's power to protect them, and therefore fell without a protector. Their protests were coldly received; some members were ordered to the bar, and treated with insulting clemency: D'Esprémenil, lamenting, when it was too late, the fatal eloquence which had made him the terror of the Court, and the popularity which had induced him to promote the convocation of the States-general, strove to sustain the existence of those ancient magistracies which he considered important and essential to the country. He was, for his efforts, as much hated, as before he had been idolized by the people; he was feebly supported in the Assembly, and the public learned with indifference that the parliaments were totally and definitively suppressed*.

1790.
August.
New tribunals.

April 30.

For the immediate exigencies of justice, new tribunals were appointed, in which there was no priority or precedence among the judges. Trial by jury had been established in civil as well as criminal cases; but it may be said, without hesitation, that such a trial, so constituted, is a certain source of oppression and cor-

* See the Histories in general, particularly Lacretelle, tom. vii. p. 335. See also *Le Moniteur* du 29 au 30 Octobre 1789, tom. i. p. 321.

† Lacretelle, tom. vii. p. 341. The protests and other matters concerning these institutions were occasionally mentioned in the Assembly in November, December, and some months in 1790.

ruption. Assisted and guided by independent, learned, and fearless judges, the jury is to man the greatest of social blessings, the best guardian of his life, freedom, character, and property; but if the correction and influence of such judges are taken away, the jury is of use merely to register the edicts of tyranny on the one hand, or to sanction the follies or perpetuate the crimes emanating from popularity on the other. All members of the Assembly, who were versed in the study and administration of the law, derided the idea of a jury in France; but their sentiments assumed a more serious aspect when, notwithstanding the struggle made by Malouet and some other members, the appointment of judges was taken from the King, who was also deprived of the most ornamental gem in the royal diadem—the power of pardoning.

Among the decrees which received the greatest commendation, was that which abolished the sale of judicial appointments. It would seem that the practice admitted of no defence, nor the reform of any censure; yet Voltaire* had employed some pains in vindicating the obnoxious system, and its abrogation did not pass without animadversion†. Lettres de cachet were forbidden, and no man was to be deprived of his liberty, but on some charge of defined and public offence. Torture before trial, or as means of obtaining confession, had before been abolished by the King; the Assembly now reduced the punishment of death to simple execution, without any additional circumstances of painful infliction: some, and Robespierre was conspicuous amongst them, were desirous of abolishing it altogether. Trials were decreed to be public, and means of defence supplied to prisoners in criminal cases.

From the nobility, nothing of value remained to be wrested; privileges, royalties, feudal rights of every kind, had been swept away; but the insatiate craving of an appetite for equality, and the base desire of low

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Sale of judicial appointments prohibited.

Letters de cachet abolished.
March 16.

Other reforms in criminal law.

Hereditary titles, badges, and armorial bearings abolished.

* *Le Monde comme il va*; *Vision de Babouc*, *Œuvres de Voltaire*, tom. xlv. pp. 109, 118, ed. 1784.

† See *Laeretelle*, tom. vii. p. 345.

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June 18.

July 30.

popularity, yet required more ; and patriotism in the present day was grieved that the rewards and honours assigned to patriotism in former times, although merely ornamental to the possessors, should be retained. Petitions, club orations, and popular libels, pointed to the mark ; and the patriotic leaders in the Assembly easily obtained decrees by which all hereditary titles, all claims to distinction by birth or descent, were destroyed, and even the wearing or exhibition of armorial bearings or liveries was forbidden. Thus was an order, as high and illustrious as any in Europe, hastily, and without an adequate motive, extirpated, and France left the only monarchy in Europe the throne of which was not graced by a body of nobility. All knight-hoods, except that of St. Louis, were abolished. The leaders in this transaction were not of the plebeian class. Lafayette contested with Alexander Lameth the honour of being the first to propose it ; and a young nobleman, bearing the illustrious name of Montmorenci, was among its most ardent supporters. The rage of reformation, at first, ran so high, that names derived from seignories in land, and borne for ages, were also to be renounced ; Montmorenci was to be Bouchard ; Lafayette, Mottié ; and Mirabeau, Riquetti. This folly was tried for a day or two in the newspapers, and in reports of legislative proceedings ; but it was given up ; Mirabeau observing, with characteristic heat, to a newspaper compiler, that for three days he had confused all Europe*.

Feb. 4.
Declaration
of the King.

Attacks on royal authority were pressed with unsparing perseverance. In hopes of producing some good effects, the King, at the suggestion of Necker, and with the advice of his ministers, went to the hall of the Assembly, and delivered a speech, full of gracious expressions and benevolent declarations, and concluded with an exhortation to peace and unanimity. " Let us all," he said, " and I set you the example, " profess but one opinion, one interest, one will, an " attachment to the new constitution, and an ardent

* His phrase was, " Vous avez desorienté l'Europe pendant trois jours." See Madame de Stael, tom. i. p. 368.

“desire for the peace, happiness, and prosperity of France.” Nothing could exceed the enthusiasm with which this speech was received; and the feeling was carried to a still greater height by a deputation which attended Louis on his return; who reported the gracious and patriotic declarations of the Queen, on her own behalf and that of the Dauphin. The members, one by one, took the civic oath of fidelity to the law, the nation, and the King; the spectators joined tumultuously in the same ceremony; addresses were presented from the Assembly and different municipalities; illuminations and a Te Deum followed; and then this great effort ceased to produce any further effect*.

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14th.

Libels and declamations against the royal family daily increased in number and virulence†. In compliance with the popular taste, the Assembly ordered that the Red Book should be printed. This book was a register of the expenses of the royal family, whether in purchases, salaries, or donations. It had been required by the Committee of Finance; and as it would disclose expenditures in the preceding reign, which could only furnish topics for malignant observation, Necker did not readily grant it: his reluctance was vanquished by a promise that no disclosure of its contents should be made, beyond the precincts of the committees, and his confidence was repaid by a treacherous publication‡.

March 4.
The red book.

June 9, 10.

The civil list, including the household troops, was fixed, at the King's own request, at twenty-five millions (£1,041,666), and a jointure of four millions (£166,666) was, in the event of surviving him, settled on the Queen. The abridgment of the prerogative with respect to making war and peace, and shewing mercy to criminals, has already been mentioned; it may be added, that the Assembly took on themselves to revise, reduce, or suppress, all pensions and allowances; that they passed a decree that no member of

Civil list.

Other reductions of prerogative.

Jan. 26.

* Histories. Bertrand's Annals, vol. ii. p. 263.

† Revue Chronologique, p. 71.

‡ See Biographical Memoirs of the French Revolution, vol. i. p. 52; vol. ii. p. 495, and the authorities there cited.

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June 17.

their body should hold any office in the state. The royal style was changed from King of France and Navarre to that of King of the French ; a change of more importance than at first sight appears, since it shows that Louis was no longer to consider himself lord of any territory, but merely a salaried president over a body of men ; and when he was also called first King of the French, it was a pretty evident intimation that his title was to be considered as elective.

Property of
the Clergy.

On the clergy the tempest of the revolution fell with unmitigated force. The tithes were already taken from them ; but their remaining property was the object of ardent and undisguised covetousness ; and their existence as an order was regarded as an evil in the state. Whenever M. Necker came to the Assembly, as he frequently did, to represent the pressure of the public debt, and the impossibility of obtaining supplies, it was always observed that the nation had within its reach a mass of treasure which would acquit all engagements, provide for all contingencies, and, after all, leave an ample fund for the support and administration of religion.

1789.
Nov. 2.

While the Assembly was sitting at the palace of the Archbishop, the first regular and systematic attack was made on the general mass of ecclesiastical property, by a motion that it should be decreed to belong to the nation. This proposition was strenuously supported by a nobleman of distinguished family, an ecclesiastic of eminent rank, M. De Talleyrand Perigord, Bishop of Autun. He was supported by Mirabeau, Thouret, Barnave, and Chapelier. Their arguments were founded on necessity, on splendid promises of public good, and on a distinction between private property, the preservation of which is the primitive and unalterable basis of all society, and the property of bodies created by the state, which the state can dissolve at pleasure, or regulate their being and their maintenance. These were opposed by the Abbé Maury, M. De Montlosier, and a few others, who cited experience against speculation, and shewed how much nations had been disappointed in their hopes of ad-

vantage on the suppression of the Jesuits. The immense property supposed to be possessed by that body yielded a revenue hardly sufficient to produce the humble pittance allotted to them. Irreligion and corruption of morals must flow from a measure which left the clergy at the mercy of every accident. An unfavourable season, a sudden war, or the bankruptcy of a collector, would be sufficient to reduce the whole body to absolute want. Their liberality, their immense eleemosynary donations, were dwelt upon; nor was the example of England forgotten, where, since the reformation, the want of that relief before derived from ecclesiastical donations had caused the introduction of the expensive and burthensome system of poor-laws. Some doubts prevailed; but Mirabeau dexterously changed the question, by proposing a decree, that all ecclesiastical property was at the disposal of the nation, subject to a suitable provision for the cost of public worship and relief of the poor, and that the smallest church-living should be of the value of twelve hundred livres (£50), exclusive of a dwelling-house and garden. This question was carried by a great majority*.

This measure of spoliation was followed by the suppression of all monasteries; the nuns, however, were not to be removed from their convents but by their own consent. As if injury would have been insipid without a grain of insult, the Assembly decreed that the attachment of the nation to the Roman Catholic religion ought not to be doubted, since the support of that form of worship held the first rank in the public expenses. Their woods and timber and their lands, to the amount of four hundred millions of livres (£6,666,666), were ordered to be sold; mortgages on these lands were declared void, and the creditors to be considered the creditors of the state; monks and nuns, ejected from their cloisters, and thrown helpless on the world, were to be sustained by a pension of six hundred livres (£25) each; and,

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1790.

1790.
Feb. 15, 28.
Suppression of
monasteries.

March 11.

18.

19.

* 568 to 346.

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LXVIII.

1790.
June 21.

finally, the whole amount of ecclesiastical benefices was settled on a most parsimonious scale. One episcopal see was assigned to each department; bishops and curates were to be elected by the people, by the plurality of votes. All were to be paid from the public treasure, and all fees and dues were abolished. The Bishop of Paris was to have an income of fifty thousand livres (£2,084) those of towns containing fifty thousand souls, twenty thousand (£834), and in towns of smaller importance, twelve thousand (£500); curés in Paris, six thousand livres (£250); in towns, from two to four thousand livres (£83 to £166); in hamlets and villages, from two thousand to twelve hundred (£83 to £50); and the smallest pay of vicars was fixed at seven hundred livres (£30).

Thus, in the course of a year from the time they assumed the title, had the National Assembly, without instructions from any constituent, without allegation of any precise facts, or examination of any aggrieved party or their witnesses, on the mere ground of popular opinion and political speculation, overthrown an ancient, powerful, and long-venerated monarchy, uprooted a nobility coeval with the records of the state itself, and prostrated an ecclesiastical establishment not inferior in rank and dignity, learning and piety, to any other in the world, making the King and his family prisoners, depriving the nobility of all weight and influence, rendering even their mere personal existence a matter of toleration, rather than of right, and reducing the clergy to a state below that of ingenious mechanics or well-employed clerks. The men who fixed these stipends blushed at their own act, but durst not risk their popularity by receding; although it was evident that the proposed pittance, mean and miserable as they were, would exist only on paper, and never be received by the unhappy persons who were thus to be fed with scraps from the plunder of their whole property.

All these things could not pass without producing discontent and resistance. In some parts of the kingdom, insubordination, riot, and massacre stalked at

Frequent riots
in the depart-
ments.

large. Affection or compassion for the King, the nobility, or the clergy, was not in all, although in some instances it was, the declared cause. Regiments and garrisons revolted against their officers, towns against their governors, and subordinates against their superiors. The Assembly was continually beset with accounts of disorders. Verdun, Brittany, Bessieres, Thoulouse, Montaubon, and Nimes, each presented its narrative of insurrection and confusion: in some, the nobility and clergy were the objects of the popular fury; in others, the ancient establishments were adopted as the cause of the insurgents. Decrees were issued against the several parties, and not altogether in vain; but, had the princes and nobles of France been at their posts, had they formed a centre around which the friends of order and religion might have rallied, their cause might not have been altogether lost; at least, it would not have been ingloriously surrendered.

Some decrees were entitled to the praise of justice and liberality, even if their policy should be doubted. Thus Protestants were declared eligible to all civil and military employments; and this privilege was subsequently extended to the Jews. It was decreed that the punishment of any individual should not entail disgrace on any other member of the family; and with this relic of barbarism was swept away the droit d'Aubaine, by virtue of which the personal property of a foreigner dying in France was seized for the benefit of the state.

On the other hand, some transactions in the Assembly were perfectly childish, while others, under an appearance of being ridiculous, covered views and designs, or at least expressed hopes and expectations, flattering to the pride and congenial with the ambition of the nation. Of the first description were the patriotic donations, still continued, but tapered down to such frivolous minuteness, that when the deputies had sacrificed their silver buckles to the exigencies of the country, the servants, with no less ostentation, made a patriotic offering of theirs. In the other description

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1790.

1789.
Dec. 24.
General toleration.

1790.
July 20.
Other beneficial reforms.

Jan. 25.

August 9.

Other proceedings.

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1790.

June 19.
Procession of
the human
race.

may be placed a procession, in which all nations were made, by their representatives, to offer their humble homage to the French people, and to intimate that the time was come when, by an universal sympathy, men would shake off the yoke by which too long they had been bowed down, and unite in the sacred cause of liberty. This measure was not one of spontaneous or casual impulse ; it was premeditated and carefully contrived and arranged. The management was assumed by one Cloutz, a Prussian, of good family, and some property in his own country. He had for some time infested the lower walks of literature, styling himself, first Cloutz the Prussian, then Val de Grace, afterward he renounced his baptismal name of Jean Baptiste, and assumed that of Anacharsis, from the Scythian philosopher, whom the Abbé Barthelemy had brought into vogue ; and, at a more advanced period, he gave himself the title of orator of the human race. Led by this adventurer, a group presented itself at the bar of the Assembly, composed of Savoyards, pedlars, attendants on gaming tables, footmen out of place, and all the refuse of society, dressed in habits borrowed from the opera-house, or made up for the occasion, and representing, not only the civilized, but all the savage nations in the world. The orator made a bombastic address, in the course of which he said, “ Never was “ embassy more sacred ; our credentials are not traced “ on parchment, but engraven in cyphers indelible on “ the heart of man ; and, thanks to the authors of the “ declaration of the rights of man, those cyphers are “ no longer to be misunderstood by tyrants.” At sight of their own discarded footmen, and the whole group thus ridiculously presented, the better sort in the Assembly had quitted the hall, unable to controul their laughter ; a sufficient number remained to receive these mock representatives of mankind with honours and acclamations ; and the president, copying the manner of the ambassador, applauded the zeal which produced the mission, and the terms in which Cloutz had expressed himself ; while, in the name of the As-

sembly, he accepted the homage of the four quarters of the globe*.

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This exhibition was preparatory to a grand national fête which had been proposed, and was then in full agitation, to commemorate the taking of the Bastille†, and to form a grand confederation; a proposal which came from M. Bailly, and was enthusiastically received. The Champ de Mars was fixed for the exhibition; and, to forward the necessary preparations, the whole city, male and female, noble and plebeian, master and servant, turned out into the field, and laboured with great diligence. The national guards, the strangers whom curiosity had attracted, every one was employed, and, barely two hours before the commencement of the ceremony, the preparations were completed. The amphitheatre was formed with an altar in the middle; the throne of the King, a magnificent pavilion, and commodious seats for the Queen and royal family, and the triumphal arches through which the various processions were to pass, were made of wood. At day-break, the citizens began to flock to the amphitheatre, and a vast concourse, amounting, according to accounts, probably exaggerated, to three millions of persons, crowded the circumjacent hills and eminences. In the great procession were bands of music, a body of national guards led by Lafayette, the electors and principal members of the municipality of Paris, deputies to the National Assembly, a deputation from the army and fleet, while a body of national guards, horse and foot, with a band of music, closed

1790.
June 5.
Confederation.

July 14.

* This president, by a curious coincidence, was Ménou, who, like Clootz, disgraced his birth and pretensions by adopting the extremes of popular fanaticism; like him, too, he renounced his Christian name and profession, assuming that of Abdallah; and, as the philosopher wrote a book called "Proofs of the Authenticity of the Mahommedan Faith," and styled himself the personal enemy of Jesus Christ, the president, when a general in Egypt, adopted the dress, the manners, and religion of Mahommed, renouncing that of Jesus. It is mentioned rather because it is curious than for its importance, that the sequel of this display was rather incommodious to Anacharsis; the heroes of his procession, restored to their natural characters, demanded payment for their loss of time, and for the dresses they had procured. They dunned him with so much perseverance, that, after exhausting all his arts of evasion, he was obliged to settle their demands by a composition.

† Civic honours were subsequently (June 19) decreed to the conquerors of that fortress.

the procession, which was rendered splendid by the display of banners, and cheerful by martial tunes, while universal exclamations of *Vive la Nation!* pierced the air. Two hundred priests stood on the steps of an altar, where the oath was administered; a function which, by order of the Commune, was performed by Talleyrand, Bishop of Autun. Undisturbed by a violent storm of wind and rain, which occurred most inopportunately, the bishop celebrated mass, pronounced a benediction on the oriflamme, or royal standard, and on the eighty-three banners of the departments.

The King, who had been appointed, for that day only, commander of all the national guards, named M. de Lafayette as his delegate: he, as representative of the military, took the oath first, placing the point of his sword on the Bible, and, raising his other hand toward heaven, while he pronounced, "We swear to be ever faithful to the nation, to the law, and to the King; to maintain, to the utmost of our power, the constitution decreed by the National Assembly, and accepted by the King." All the members of the National Assembly then standing up, the President pronounced the oaths in his own name, and that of his brethren.

When the King arose, a great body of the national guards pressed near the throne, which they surrounded with raised arms, while he swore to employ all the power consigned to him in maintaining the constitution, and in enforcing the execution of the laws. A signal being given that the King had taken the oath, the air resounded with alternate peals or artillery and shouts of the people; and thus ended a ceremony which has justly been considered as the grandest and most extensive act of perjury that heaven and earth ever witnessed.

Observations.

No good could reasonably be hoped from this ceremony; that it would produce harmony and extinguish party hatred, was not at all probable: the rumour of the event had caused the re-appearance of the Duke of Orléans; and, although his character was justly es-

timated, and his means of doing evil greatly diminished, still he had the will to perpetrate crimes, and followers who would give effect to his desires. The ferocity of the populace was not diminished, for, amid their shouts of joy and peals of laughter, *tous les aristocrats à la lanterne* was their song, and the national guards and Lafayette joined in the savage chorus. One peril the popular party had overlooked; they had brought to Paris eighty thousand Fédérés, as they were called, selected from a respectable class of citizens in the provinces. They were not, like the mere mob, inflamed by declamations without proof, but came with hearts untainted, and replete with genuine loyalty. Writers of all parties agree that, had these men been resorted to, the King might have made a formidable opposition to his enemies; perhaps, as he was situated, little could have been effected*; but the result might have been very different had an attempt been made under the auspices and with the support of those who shrunk into voluntary seclusion, or wandered in self-imposed exile.

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1790.

The Fédérés.

Daily reports were presented on the distressed state of the treasury, and the utter deficiency of finance; but the leaders of the Assembly, anxious to sanction the plunder of the clergy by a plea of necessity, did not even enquire for any other plan of supply. When the wished-for decree had been obtained, a new mode of raising money was devised. Effects of the clergy and of the Crown, to the amount of four hundred millions, had some months previously† been directed to be sold, and a new sort of paper money, called assignats, to the same amount was ordered to be issued, to the repayment of which, the monies raised by the sale were to be applied; and all the lands, now termed national domains, were to be considered as mortgaged for a security. This proposition, greatly favoured out of doors by bankers and possessors of money, who ex-

Finances.

Assignats
issued.

* On this subject, see *Histoire de la Conjuration du Duc d'Orléans*, tom. iii. p. 65; *Pages Histoire Secrète de la Revolution*, tom. i. p. 560, n.; *Memoirs of the Marquis de Bouillé*, p. 166.

† On the 29th of November, 1789.

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LXVIII.

1790.

March 19th.

Decline of
Necker's
influence.

His retreat.

pected to derive immense wealth from speculations in the new paper, was supported by the energy and splendid oratory of Mirabeau, and by the popular party, while the arguments against it were treated with contemptuous derision. Experience was deemed a chimera, history a collection of dreams, not worthy of attention from the wise and liberal of modern days. The Mississippi scheme and the more recent paper money of America were referred to in vain. What affinity was there, it was said, between the visionary territory of the Mississippi, or the uncultivated wilds of America, and the visible, tangible, fertile, and highly cultivated lands of France? The issue of assignats was decreed, and the prophecies of those who opposed the measure were almost instantly verified. People in the provinces, unacquainted with any but metallic money, looked on the paper currency with suspicion, the price of all commodities was instantly enhanced, contracts became embarrassed with difficulties, and their value daily diminished.

Against the creation of this new resource, Necker had made great exertions; but his efforts were not regarded with interest, or his person with respect. No longer the oracle of a faction, or the idol of a mob, he was sunk into the character of a mere official drudge, his opinion no longer sought, his assertions no longer respected. In all parties, his opponents were to be found; in none, his supporters or adherents. From the moment of his return to office, his popularity withered, and his destruction was decreed. Beside the daily occurrence of circumstances tending to shew how much he was hated by some, how utterly unsupported by any, he, at length, received information that an insurrection was preparing, of which his death would be the principal object*. Alarmed by this threat, he wrote to the Assembly, demanding leave to retire, assigning, as a cause, his ill-health, and proffering to leave the money due to him from government,

* Sur l'Administration de M. Necker, par lui même, p. 424.—Bertrand's Mémoires, vol. i. p. 174.

amounting to £96,250 sterling, together with his hotel and furniture, as pledges for the integrity of his administration. The Assembly passed to the order of the day. This indifference was a thunder-stroke to Necker; but he had still some hopes of returning kindness, and remained eight days in Paris, awaiting, as he expressed himself, from some quarter, a sentiment of justice or of benevolence*.

When he quitted the capital, he saw with regret that none of the acclamations which hailed his arrival as the salvation of France attended him; he had an opportunity of knowing that he had been a mere tool in the hands of desperate and violent operators, now to be cast aside as useless, and stigmatized as worthless. But this contempt was not the only bitter ingredient in the cup he had to drain; communications from the Jacobin club had prepared their accomplices in every town for his approach. At Arcis-sur-Aube, a small municipality, forty leagues from Paris, he was arrested and his passports demanded; and although their authenticity and correctness were undisputed, he and his family were detained in close military confinement, until a messenger had been dispatched to the Assembly, with a letter which, under most jealous caution, he had been permitted to write. That body, after debate, forbade further interruption to his journey, but carefully abstained from all expressions of kindness to him, regret at the insult he had sustained, or disapprobation of those by whom it had been inflicted. At Vesoul he was again arrested by the mob, who cut the traces of his carriage, and uttered insults and menaces. His trunks were forced and his papers strictly examined, while it was not concealed from him, that if any thing could be found affording a pretext, he would be surrendered to the fury of the populace.

He was at last permitted to proceed, and reached his abode at Copet in a state of mind not to be described, and with difficulty to be imagined. His virtuous life and religious sentiments afforded little

* Sur l'Administration, &c. p. 256.

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1790.

shelter from the storm of passions excited by disappointed ambition and mortified pride. "In the state "in which I am," he said to a friend, "I can feel "nothing but the blast which has prostrated me*." He passed the rest of his days in obscurity, still languishing to return to that power which to him had produced neither happiness nor honour†, uncheered by attentions from the great and prosperous, unsoothed by addresses of praise, thanks, or condolence from any of those on whom he had conferred favours, or by whom he had been idolized‡.

* To Gibbon. See his *Posthumous Works*, vol. i. p. 213. 4to.—vol. i, p. 314. 8vo. For the general circumstances of Necker's retreat from office, see *Biographical Memoirs of the French Revolution*, vol. ii. p. 196, and authorities there cited. Madame de Stael, *Considerations*, &c. tom. i. p. 387, and the various histories. His character is given by Mr. Mackintosh in these words. That minister, probably upright, and not illiberal, but narrow, pusillanimous, and entangled by the habits of detail in which he had been reared, possessed not that erect and intrepid spirit, those enlarged and original views, which adapt themselves to new combinations of circumstances and sway, in the great convulsions of human affairs. Accustomed to the tranquil accuracy of commerce, or the elegant amusement of literature, he was called on "to ride in the whirlwind, and direct the storm." He seemed superior to his privacy while he was limited to it, and would have been judged by history equal to his elevation had he never been elevated."—*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, p. 30.

† He made known to Bonaparte, in 1800, in an awkward manner, his desire to be again admitted to the administration: he was of course refused. —*Las Cases' Journal*, vol. i. part 2, p. 131.

‡ For the general narrative of French affairs, where no particular authority is cited, I have consulted the various historians, from Rabaut de St. Etienne, to Lacretelle and Thiers, the periodical publications of the time, and particularly the *Moniteur* for debates, motions, and notice of passing events.

CHAPTER THE SIXTY-NINTH.

1790—1791.

Effects of the French revolution on other countries.—England.

—Mr. Burke.—Different views in the opposition party.—Meeting at the Duke of Portland's.—Mr. Burke's intended publication.—Revolution Society.—Dr. Price's discourse.—Address to the National Assembly.—Mr. Burke's reflections published—the contents analyzed—observations—rapid diffusion of the work—honours paid to the author—attacks on him—numerous answers.—The Rights of Man, by Thomas Paine—analyzed—its effect.—*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, by Mr. Mackintosh—analyzed—observations.—Difference between Thomas Paine and Mr. Mackintosh."—General Election.—Mr. Pitt.—Unimproved state of opposition.—Lord North succeeds to a peerage.—Contests for seats.—Mr. Horne Tooke stands for Westminster.—King's speech.—Addresses.—Debates on Nootka Sound.—Appropriation of unclaimed dividends.—Petitions.—Committee on public finance.—Report.—Mr. Sheridan moves resolutions—generally negatived.—Slave trade.—Society of Amis des Noirs.—Mission from England.—Slow progress of investigation in Parliament.—Open committee appointed.—Mr. Wilberforce's motion for a bill—debated—lost.—Colony at Sierra Leone established.—Bill opposed—passed.

FROM the period of the revolution, France became the pivot or hinge on which turned the politics, domestic as well as foreign, of all other nations. The ambition which had always characterized the French, gave grounds for apprehending that, at the first favourable moment, territorial aggrandisement would be attempted, without regard to treaties, arrangements, or

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1790.
Effects of the
revolution
on other
countries.

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established principles. Their treatment of the princes of Germany, whose territorial privileges in the provinces acquired by France, long guaranteed by treaties, were taken away by the decrees of the fourth of August, and their avowed resolution to wrest Avignon, an ancient and undisputed possession, from the Pope, exhibited a fearful specimen of their probable conduct, when the acquisition of strength should enable them to realize their present projects. But there was much more reason to entertain serious apprehensions from the diffusion of the avowed principles of revolution,—a task which, in every country, was laboured by all who were dissatisfied with the general administration, or their own particular position; who hoped from change to derive undefined benefit, or who looked with malignant anticipation to the confusion and distress which would be produced by a general subversion.

England.

In England, where a general love of liberty was blended with a profound and sincere veneration for principles and establishments, bought with blood and endeared by length of possession, the furious progress of the French reformers was viewed, first with distrust, afterward with astonishment, and, at last, with horror. This feeling existed principally among the superior and more opulent classes, but it was acquiring daily strength; on the other side, a great number of active and vehement individuals entered fully into the views, and, without reserve, applauded all the measures of the French revolutionists, and the contest was carried on with so much vigour and determination, that patriot, democrat, and aristocrat, were terms as well known and as much used in London as in Paris. The preponderant influence of wealth and information was on the side of authority; but some men of great property were found to favour the system which in France had led to plunder and spoliation; and some noblemen of high extraction and ancient family avowed themselves democrats, and talked vauntingly of the majesty of the people. The revolution was regarded by many as a great crisis in the affairs, not of France alone, but of all Europe, perhaps of all the world.

Wonderful effects were in many instances produced by means the most absurd, in the most ridiculous modes, and apparently by the most contemptible instruments. In viewing this strange chaos of levity and ferocity, and of all sorts of crimes commixed with all sorts of follies, opposite passions succeeded, and sometimes were blended with each other in the mind; contempt and indignation, laughter and tears, scorn and horror. Others surveyed this scene with sentiments of exultation and rapture, considering the proceedings in France only as a firm and temperate exertion of freedom, consistent on the whole with morals and with piety, deserving of present applause and replete with promise of future happiness.

That Mr. Burke, from whose works the last period is principally derived*, should be the champion of those who opposed the revolution, excited surprise in many, and most in those who knew him but slightly, or considered him superficially. From his speeches and publications, during a long course of opposition, expressions and sentiments were easily and copiously selected, which could be made applicable to the popular cause; but a consideration of his whole course of life and conduct would shew him to be a strenuous advocate of liberty, and a zealous promoter of temperate reform; but, at the same time, a vigorous supporter of the British constitution, and all its general establishments in church and state, vigilantly guarding against the encroachments of direct tyranny and overwhelming influence; but never giving his sanction to the enterprizes of rash innovators or the schemes of interested agitators. Thus, while he was exercising the whole force of his genius and talents in defence of those whom he considered to be the victims of oppression in America, he did not display himself at any factious meeting or association to produce effects upon government by other means than the votes of Parliament; while he was urging, with indefatigable zeal, the cause of economical reform, he did not seek

Mr. Burke.

* Burke's Works, vol. v. p. 39.

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1790.

Different views
of the opposi-
tion party.

1790.

February 11th.
Meeting at
the Duke of
Portland's.

the destruction of ancient and honourable institutions; nor could all the efforts of personal or party attachment induce him to favour that which he considered destructive of all constitutional establishments, the reform of Parliament*.

On the difference of opinion between Mr. Burke and Mr. Fox on the great topic of the revolution being declared, two modes of conduct were pursued by different members of the opposition party. One portion, considering Mr. Burke as a weight upon their interests, and perhaps as an obstruction to their views of high personal consideration, appeared anxious to foment the dispute, and to prevent every attempt at reconciliation; another division, higher, more respectable, and clear-sighted, foreseeing the evils which must ensue from disunion, were desirous, if possible, to find some middle proposition which might enable the whole body to act together. For this purpose a meeting was held at the house of the Duke of Portland, at which all the really great and influential men of the party were present, and which lasted from ten o'clock at night till three in the morning. An inferior agent, giving himself credit for more influence than he ever possessed, has said, that this great and long-continued meeting was held for the purpose of endeavouring to reconcile Mr. Burke and Mr. Sheridan, and that he brought them together at Burlington House†. But the attempt was not crowned with success.

* Mr. (Sir James) Mackintosh says, "The late opinions of Mr. Burke furnished more matter of astonishment to those who had distantly observed, than to those who had correctly examined the system of his former political life. An abhorrence for abstract politics, a predilection for aristocracy, and a dread of innovation, have ever been among the most sacred articles of his public creed." *Vindiciæ Gallicæ* Introduction, p. 1.

† These are the very words in which Mr. Dennis O'Bryen relates the matter in a pamphlet, published in 1796, under the title of "*Utrum Horum. The Government or the Country?*" p. 25, n. "It appeared to the author of this pamphlet that the difference between these two great men would be a great evil to the country, and to their own party. Full of this persuasion, he brought them both together the second night after the original contest in the House of Commons, and carried them to Burlington House, to Mr. Fox and the Duke of Portland, according to a previous arrangement. This interview, which can never be forgotten by those who were present, lasted from ten o'clock at night till three in the morning, and afforded a very remarkable display of the extraordinary talents of the party." This narrative was re-stated by Mr. Charles Mc. Cormick, *Memoirs of Edmund Burke*, p. 338; and by Mr. Moore, *Memoirs of the Life of Sheridan*, vol. ii. p. 107.

Mr. Burke had long meditated a publication in which he would express, at large, his opinions on the French Revolution, its causes, progress, and the dangers with which it menaced civilized society. He had been retarded by many circumstances; the fastidiousness of his own taste, and that severe revision to which he always subjected his works; and, the varying aspect which the affairs of France derived from the debates and events of every day, while they amplified his matter, increased his hesitation, until his determination was fixed by an event which aroused his highest indignation.

A political club had been formed, under the name of a Society for commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain*. On Thursday, the fourth of November 1789, this society held their anniversary meeting at the London Tavern, under the presidency of Earl Stanhope. They went, in the course of the day, to a meeting-house of Presbyterian Dissenters, in the Old Jewry, where Dr. Richard Price, already so well known by his publications during the American war, and others after that contest, delivered a sermon or essay, which he published under the title of "A Discourse on the Love of our Country." The general observations made by the Reverend Doctor would be open to much animadversion†; but, although his sentiments on love of the country were very questionable, they probably would never have been drawn into notice, except by the professed reviewers of literature, had he not, in the course of his harangue, assumed that the Revolution of 1688

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1790.
Mr. Burke's
intended
publication.

Revolution
Society.

Dr. Price's
discourse.

* The Revolution Society is said to have existed ever since the event from which its name is derived; but its proceedings were undisturbed, and its very existence was generally unknown, until the thought occurred of applying to Parliament for a bill to establish a peculiar commemoration, the failure of which has already been mentioned (see Chapter 66). One anniversary had already been celebrated by the society, when Dr. Kippis delivered a prudent, temperate, yet eloquent and animated discourse. On the same day, Dr. Towers made an oration at the London Tavern, equally unexceptionable. These facts, when we consider the discourse of Dr. Price, uttered only twelve months afterward, show the prodigious and pernicious influence of the French Revolution. The Sermon and Oration were both published at the request of the Society: so was Dr. Price's Discourse. See an Abstract of the History and Proceedings of the Revolution Society, published by order of the Committee, 1789.

† See A Letter to the Reverend Richard Price, on his Discourse, &c. written, with his usual force and elegance, by the Reverend William Cox.

established, among other things, the right of the people of England to chuse their own governors, to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government for themselves.

Whether these opinions were approved or rejected, they were, at least, relative to the subject which the society professed to celebrate; but when the discourse had come to that point, where, as the orator expressed himself, the audience "might reasonably expect that it should close," he would not dismiss them, until he had recalled particularly to their recollection "the favourableness of the present times to all exertions in the cause of public liberty. What an eventful period," he exclaimed, "is this! I am thankful that I have lived to it; and I could almost say, 'Lord now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, 'for mine eyes have seen thy salvation.' I have lived to see a diffusion of knowledge which has undermined superstition and error. I have lived to see thirty millions of people, indignant and resolute, spurning at slavery, and demanding liberty with an irresistible voice; their King led in triumph, and an arbitrary monarch surrendering himself to his subjects. After sharing in the benefits of one revolution, I have been spared to be witness to two other revolutions, both glorious. And now methinks I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading; a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws; and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience. Be encouraged, all ye friends of freedom, and writers in its defence! The times are auspicious. Your labours have not been in vain. Behold kingdoms, admonished by you, starting from sleep, breaking their fetters, and claiming justice from their oppressors! Behold the light you have struck out, after setting America free, reflected to France, and there kindled into a blaze that lays despotism in ashes, and warms and illuminates Europe! Tremble, all ye oppressors of the world! Take warning, all ye supporters of slavish

“ governments, and slavish hierarchies! Call no more
 “ (absurdly and wickedly) reformation, innovation.
 “ You cannot now hold the world in darkness. Strug-
 “ gle no longer against increasing light and liberality.
 “ Restore to mankind their rights; and consent to the
 “ correction of abuses, before they and you are de-
 “ stroyed together.”

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On the day that this discourse was delivered, the society, on the motion of Dr. Price, resolved that, disdaining national partialities, and rejoicing in every triumph of liberty and justice over arbitrary power, they would offer to the National Assembly of France their congratulations on the revolution, and on the prospect it gave to the two first kingdoms in the world of a common participation in the blessings of civil and religious liberty. This address, signed by Earl Stanhope, as chairman, was most favourably received, and acknowledged by a vote of the Assembly, which was transmitted, signed by the Archbishop of Aix, as president. The French prelate also wrote a separate letter to the noble president of the club. A particular communication of the vote had been made to the Duke de la Rochefoucault; and as the business which occupied the Archbishop prevented him from a speedy acknowledgment, the Duke wrote to Dr. Price, whom he styled the great apostle of liberty, whose address to the Assembly he hailed as the dawn of a glorious day, in which two nations, which had always esteemed each other, should contract an intimate union, founded on the similarity of their opinions and their common enthusiasm for liberty. The Archbishop and the Duke received the thanks of the society. The Patriotic Club of Dijon, the Patriotic Union of Lisle, and M. Badouin, a supplementary deputy to the Assembly, presented their addresses to the society, and all received their meed of thanks, applause, and congratulation*.

Address to the
 National
 Assembly.

Nov. 25th.

Dec. 5th.

Dec. 2nd.

Nearly a year after Dr. Price's discourse had been delivered, Mr. Burke's opinions on the same subject

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 Oct.

* These papers were published by order of the society, and were also, with the Declaration of the Rights of Man, and some other letters addressed more particularly to himself, subjoined by Dr. Price as an Appendix to his Discourse.

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Mr. Burke's
Reflections
published.

appeared, under the title of “ Reflections on the Revolution in France, and on the Proceedings of certain “ Societies in London.” The author says that, in the early days of the revolution, a young gentleman, a correspondent of the author, had requested his opinions on passing events; and an answer had been prepared, but, on prudential considerations, delayed, and finally suppressed. Recent transactions had obliged him to expand his reflections far beyond the scope of a letter, and finally to give them to the public, with a commencement resembling that of an epistolary communication, but at length, and in a style utterly unlike any letter which had ever been written for mere private perusal*.

It had long been believed by the public that Mr. Burke was preparing some work on the French revolution; his public difference in opinion with his old political friends, the evident want of some statesman-like and masterly view of that great event, and the general consciousness that no man was so well qualified to do justice to the mighty task, excited general expectation and whetted public curiosity to the utmost degree of eagerness. It appeared; and never was expectation more fully satisfied, or curiosity more amply repaid.

Mr. Burke began by noticing two clubs in London, that for constitutional information, and the Revolution Society; the proceedings of the latter having been published by authority, as well as Dr. Price's sermon, and the commendatory epistles already mentioned. By assuming, in their address to the French legislature, of a sort of corporate quality, he observed, they might deceive persons unacquainted with the manners and laws of England. Dr. Price's discourse was a very extraordinary miscellaneous composition, in which some good moral and religious sentiments, not ill expressed, were mixed up with a sort of porridge of various political opinions and reflections, in a strain not heard in this kingdom since the days of Dr. Price's

* In the octavo edition of his works, it occupies four hundred and ten closely printed pages; see vol. v.

predecessor, Hugh Peters. He combated with great force the assertion that the King owed his crown to the choice of the people; he treated as a new and unheard-of Bill of Rights, the doctrine that at the Revolution the people acquired a right to choose their own governors; to cashier them for misconduct, and to frame a government for themselves; and he shewed, by references to history, and the statute itself, that the Declaration of Rights, passed at the time of the Revolution, afforded no ground for such an assertion.

The change which had been effected in France afforded to the people no reason for congratulation; they had bought undisguised calamities at a higher price than any nation had purchased the most unequivocal blessings. France had bought poverty by crime! France had not sacrificed her virtue to her interest; but she had abandoned her interest that she might prostitute her virtue. He analyzed the composition of the representatives of the tiers état and the clergy; among whom, no man possessed the practical wisdom founded on experience, so necessary to a good government. A great proportion, a majority, was formed of practitioners in the law, not of distinguished magistrates, or leading advocates, but of the inferior, unlearned, mechanical, merely instrumental members of the profession; the ministers of municipal litigation, the fomenters and conductors of the petty war of village vexation. Of the clergy, a large proportion was mere country curates, men who would regard property, secular or ecclesiastical, with envy, and would readily join in any project of spoliation if allured by the slightest hope of sharing in the plunder. "Nothing," he said, "is a due and adequate representation of a state, that does not represent its ability, as well as its property. But as ability is a vigorous and active principle, and property sluggish, inert, and timid, it never can be safe from the invasions of ability, unless it be, out of all proportion, predominant in the representation."

Differing entirely from Dr. Price, he described France as in the crisis of a revolution, militant, but

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not triumphant, setting an example which tended to pervert all the well-placed sympathies in the human breast. In this famous sermon of the Old Jewry, he said, plots, massacres, assassinations, seem a trivial price for obtaining a revolution. A cheap, bloodless reformation, a guiltless liberty, appear flat and vapid to their taste. There must be a great change of scene; there must be a magnificent stage effect; there must be a grand spectacle to rouse the imagination, grown torpid with the lazy enjoyment of sixty years security, and the still, unanimating repose of public prosperity. The preacher found them all in the French revolution. His enthusiasm kindles as he advances; and when he arrives at his peroration, it is in a full blaze. Then viewing, from the Piskah of his pulpit, the free, moral, happy, flourishing, and glorious state of France, as in a bird's-eye landscape of a promised land, he breaks out into rapture; and then he quoted the passage already cited, where the preacher assumed to himself the privilege of using the words of the pious Simeon, when, in the temple of God, he received into his aged arms, the infant Redeemer. This was not an original flight; Hugh Peters had made it long before, although he neither departed so soon as he wished, nor in peace. The scenes of the fifth and sixth of October, which he pathetically described, ought not to have formed the ground of so much rapture; but there were palates to which the sufferings of monarchs afforded a delicious repast. He described, in glowing language, the dangers incurred by the Queen, her former splendour and present misery and degradation, her sufferings both in her own person and on account of her husband, family, and friends, the imprisonment to which they were subjected, and the daily insults they were doomed to undergo, and burst into an impassioned exclamation. "It is now sixteen or seventeen years since I saw the Queen of France, then the Dauphiness, at Versailles; and surely never lighted on this orb, which she hardly seemed to touch, a more delightful vision. I saw her just above the horizon, decorating and cheering the elevated sphere she just began to move in,

“glittering like the morning star, full of life, and
 “splendour, and joy. Oh! what a revolution! and
 “what a heart must I have to contemplate, without
 “emotion, that elevation and that fall! Little did I
 “dream, when she added titles of veneration to those
 “of enthusiastic, distant, respectful love, that she
 “should ever be obliged to carry the sharp antidote
 “against disgrace concealed in that bosom; little did
 “I dream that I should have lived to see such disasters
 “fallen upon her in a nation of gallant men, in a
 “nation of men of honour and of cavaliers. I thought
 “ten thousand swords must have leaped from their
 “scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her
 “with insult. But the age of chivalry is gone. That
 “of sophisters, economists, and calculators, has suc-
 “ceeded; and the glory of Europe is extinguished for
 “ever. Never, never more, shall we behold that
 “generous loyalty to rank and sex, that proud sub-
 “mission, that dignified obedience, that subordination
 “of the heart, which kept alive, even in servitude
 “itself, the spirit of an exalted freedom. The un-
 “bought grace of life, the cheap defence of nations,
 “the nurse of manly sentiment and heroic enterprise
 “is gone! It is gone, that sensibility of principle,
 “that chastity of honour, which felt a stain like a
 “wound, which inspired courage whilst it mitigated
 “ferocity, which ennobled whatever it touched, and
 “under which vice lost half its evil, by losing all its
 “grossness. This mixed system of opinion and sen-
 “timent had its origin in the ancient chivalry; and
 “the principle, though varied in its appearance by the
 “varying state of human affairs, subsisted and influ-
 “enced through a long succession of generations, even
 “to the time we live in. If it should ever be totally
 “extinguished, the loss I fear will be great. It is this
 “which has given its character to modern Europe. It is
 “this which has distinguished it under all forms of go-
 “vernment, and distinguished it, to its advantage, from
 “the states of Asia, and possibly from those states which
 “flourished in the most brilliant periods of the antique
 “world. It was this which, without confounding
 “ranks, had produced a noble equality, and handed it

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“ down through all the gradations of social life. It
 “ was this opinion which mitigated kings into com-
 “ panions, and raised private men to be fellows with
 “ kings. Without force or opposition, it subdued the
 “ fierceness of pride and power ; it obliged sovereigns
 “ to submit to the soft collar of social esteem ; com-
 “ pelled stern authority to submit to elegance ; and
 “ gave a domination vanquisher of laws to be subdued
 “ by manners*.”

Mr. Burke then analysed the system by which plunder and degradation had been inflicted on the clergy, exposed the false and futile philosophy which was to be substituted for Christianity, and vindicated, in terms of manly energy, the love and respect which

* This extract is given at an unusual length, not on account of its own beauty alone, but because it formed the theme of many a declamatory animadversion, and was the subject of much misrepresentation both in speeches and in print. In editions of his sermon, published after Mr. Burke's "Reflections" had appeared, Dr. Price (see preface to the fourth edition of his *Discourse*) complained of being compared to Hugh Peters, and of the allusion to that reformer's fate as a horrid misrepresentation and menace. He assured the public that the events to which he referred when he assumed the character of Simeon were not those of the sixth of October, but those only of the fourteenth of July and the subsequent days ; when, after the conquest of the Bastille, the King of France sought the protection of the National Assembly, and, by his own desire, was conducted, amidst acclamations never before heard in France, to Paris, there to shew himself to his people as the restorer of their liberty. If this is to be taken as the mere assertion of a fact, it will be viewed very differently, perhaps, by those who were acquainted with, and had a personal respect for, Dr. Price, and those who had not such advantages. Sentiments arising from personal knowledge may occasion a belief which any examination of mere probabilities would render it impossible to entertain. Leaving out of the question the propriety of arrogating the character and using the language of Simeon on such an occasion, who can believe that, in speaking of *this* as an eventful period, the preacher meant to allude to events which had taken place four months before, every day of which had been eventful, and not to that which had occurred within one little month of the time when the exclamation was uttered ? Can it be believed that any member of the Revolution Society, who was detained to hear the conclusion of the discourse, had the slightest notion that the allusion was to the fourteenth of July ? Had it been so, the horrors which accompanied and followed that day might have been eulogized in a place more appropriate than the pulpit. But, in fact, the circumstances do not equally apply. The uncompelled visit of Louis to Paris in July, and his return to Versailles in the evening, formed a very insipid dish, compared with his compelled journey in October, and the prohibition of his return. He was then indeed led in triumph, and surrendered himself to his subjects. On the former occasion, no one but Bailly dreamt of the people having re-conquered their king. The distinction which is attempted shews at least that Dr. Price was ashamed that the praise of the sixth of October was imputed to him, although his retreat upon the fourteenth of July is not very fortunate. It might not have been easy, in the pulpit declamation, to have introduced an explanatory parenthesis ; but, as the sermon had been printed many months, ten at least, before Mr. Burke's work, it might have been expected that, in one of the three editions which had come from the press, a note, comprised in two or three lines, would have been usefully employed in preventing or dissipating a notion which prevailed very generally.

the people of this country feel for the established church, and the proud satisfaction with which they saw her erect her mitred front in our courts and parliaments. The spoliation of their property he ascribed to the efforts of the envious, and the cupidity of the monied interest; and he did not forget the literary junto, the makers of the *Encyclopædia*, and the various infidel writers who had so much contributed to pervert the public mind, and to inflame every evil passion and anti-social feeling.

He then exposed the miserable form of the present government. That which was destroyed he allowed to be the best of the unqualified, or ill-qualified, monarchies; but still, full of abuses, accumulated in a length of time, as they must in every monarchy not under the constant inspection of a popular representation. But, through the new system, corn had disappeared, and mendicancy formed a shocking and disgusting spectacle; while the people were comforted by the assurance that they were a nation of philosophers; or by arts of quackish parade, by shew, tumult, and bustle, by alarms of plots and invasions: thus did their rulers attempt to drown the cries of indigence, and to divert the eyes of the observer from the ruin and wretchedness of the state.

By the advocates of the revolution the vices of the ancient government were exaggerated; the fame of the country itself was attacked, by painting almost all that could have attracted the attention of strangers; their nobility, and their clergy, as objects of horror. From his own observation, he spoke with high respect of the manners, acquirements, and general conduct of the nobility.

Of the clergy, the character he had collected was not dissimilar; and he lamented, while he deprecated, the perversion by which history was made to serve for a magazine, furnishing offensive and defensive weapons for party warfare, recurring to distant events, particularly the massacre of St. Bartholomew, to inflame the public mind against the priesthood. An establishment was overthrown; that which was substituted seemed intended only to be temporary, and preparatory

to the utter abolition of the Christian religion. He considered the National Assembly as a voluntary association, whose proceedings had not the sanction and authority of the character under which they first met. They had departed from the instructions of the people who had deputed them, which were, in fact, the sole source of their authority. Their schemes of reform were all comprised in abolition and destruction. Their plan of future elections, founded on contributions, however moderate in amount, were inconsistent with the alleged principle of the rights of man. In their geometrical distribution and arithmetical arrangement of their pretended citizens, they treaty France exactly like a country of conquest. Acting as conquerors, they had imitated the policy of the harshest of that harsh race, destroying all vestiges of the ancient country, in religion, in polity, in laws, and in manners. He foretold, and experience had already given a direction to his foresight, that the newly invented assignats must soon be depreciated, and, in the end, of no value. This delusion he considered as the first cementing principle of the new system. The second was that of giving a controuling superiority to the city of Paris.

Toward the formation of an executive power, they had chosen a degraded King, a machine without any sort of deliberative discretion in any one act of his function. He was not the fountain of justice. The judges, neither the original nor the appellate, were of his nomination. He could not command executory service, for he had no means to reward it; not in a permanent office; not in a grant of land; no, not in a pension of fifty pounds a year; not in the vainest and most trivial title. A king so circumstanced, if, stupified by his misfortunes, he could think it not the necessity, but the premium and privilege of life to eat and sleep, without any regard to glory, could never be fit for the office. To inferior people such a situation might be matter of honour; but to be raised to it, and to descend to it, were very different circumstances. He equally disapproved the abolition of parliaments: old, tried, and valued, although not, in all respects, unexceptionable tribunals, had been destroyed, and

were replaced by judges, not seated on a bench of independence, but reduced to blind obedience.

Adverting then to the army, Mr. Burke described, in animated language, the state of a force which had its beginning in organized insubordination, and which was authorized and encouraged to mix in popular assemblies, and not restrained in habits of idleness, luxury, dissipation, and disobedience. "If the soldiers," he said, "once come to mix for any time in the municipal clubs, cabals and confederacies, an elective attraction will draw them to the lowest and most desperate part. In the weakness of one kind of authority, and in the fluctuation of all, the officers of an army will remain for some time mutinous and full of faction, until some popular general, who understands the art of conciliating the soldiery, and who possesses the true spirit of command, shall draw the eyes of all men upon himself. Armies will obey him on his personal account. There is no other way of securing military obedience in this state of things. But the moment in which that event shall happen, the person who really commands the army is your master; the master (that is little) of your King, the master of your Assembly, the master of your whole republic."

In conclusion, Mr. Burke vindicated his motives, explained the tenour of his political life, and asserted his consistency. "These opinions," he said, "come from one who has been no tool of power, no flatterer of greatness; from one who desires honours, distinctions, and emoluments, but little; and who expects them not at all; who has no contempt for fame, and no fear for obloquy; who shuns contention, though he will hazard an opinion; from one who wishes to preserve consistency, but who would preserve consistency by varying his means to secure the unity of his end; and, when the equipoise of the vessel in which sails may be endangered by overloading it on one side, is desirous of carrying the small weight of his reasons to that which may preserve its equipoise."

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Observations.

If this publication appears to be noticed with unusual minuteness, it is to be observed that there never proceeded from the press a work which so powerfully swayed the minds of men, so materially influenced the fate of nations. The extracts above, or any extracts, or any analysis, must fail in conveying an adequate notion of this extraordinary production; in which a force of reasoning, which the mind struggles in vain to resist, and a firmness of conclusion which appears almost to resemble inspired prophecy, are adorned with an eloquence alternately pathetic and impetuous, reasoning sometimes persuasive, sometimes commanding; with bright flashes of wit, ingenious illustration, apt and unexpected quotation, and all the charms and graces with which genius, learning, and long practice can endow a writer. Nor was it free from many of the faults which fervour of temper, and a habit, too frequent with Mr. Burke, of being careless about the propriety of his metaphors, provided they were cogent and illustrative, cannot fail to produce*. Differences of opinion have always, and probably ever will prevail, respecting the persons he has stigmatized, the historical statements he has sought to establish, and the system he has endeavoured to defend; but all must regard with astonishment the clearness and precision with which he foretold the fate of the Royal Family, the overthrow of the Christian religion in France, the utter failure of the paper money system, and particularly the precise description, more like narrative of a past event than anticipation of one to come, of the future military ruler of France, realized in a person who was, at the time, a man unknown, serving, with the title of lieutenant-colonel, in the national guard of Ajaccio in Corsica†.

Expectation had been raised to its highest pitch by the promise of this work, and the unparalleled eagerness with which it was purchased shewed how

Rapid diffusion of the work.

* A collection of these, sometimes exaggerated, but generally not unjust, has been made by David Williams. See *Lessons to a Young Prince*, by an Old Statesman, p. 153.

† *Œuvres de Napoléon Bonaparte*, tome i. p. 14. *Précis chronologique*, &c.

completely every hope was gratified. It is said that the number of English copies sold exceeded thirty thousand, beside a French translation, executed by M. Dupont—a fact, which, considering the price, which was never reduced, and the nature of the subject, is altogether astonishing.

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The tributes of applause which the author received from the great and the learned were highly gratifying. Unreserved praise was expressed by the Emperor of Germany, the Empress of Russia, the King of England, Stanislaus, the unfortunate King of Poland, and the French princes. From Trinity College, Dublin, he received an honorary degree, and from the resident graduates of the University of Oxford a warm acknowledgment, which, to enhance its value, was conveyed to him by his beloved friend and adherent, Mr. Windham*. A great number of distinguished literary characters, some addressing themselves personally to him, others in letters to their friends, and some, in printed works, expressed their deep sense of the merits of this great work, their expectations of its utility, and their admiration of the author†.

Honours paid
to the author.

If Mr. Burke had a right to be gratified with such eulogies, no pains were spared to diminish his satisfaction by unmeasured obloquies. Beside the usual vehicles of periodical criticism, the reviews and magazines, the columns of the daily papers were loaded with abusive paragraphs; the pen of the ballad-maker and the burin of the caricaturist were also impressed into the service; the halls of debating societies, and the dinner rooms of clubs and social parties, were equally engaged in swelling the scream of disapproba-

Attacks on
him.

* The value of this high compliment was not diminished in the sight of him to whom it was paid, or of mankind at large, by the sneering observation of an adverse writer, who says, "What indeed could have been expected from the delegates of a nation, in which, a few years before, the University of Oxford, representing the national learning and wisdom, had, in a solemn decree, offered their congratulations to Sir George Mackenzie (infamous for the abuse of brilliancy and accomplishment to the most servile and profligate purposes) as having confuted the abominable doctrines of Buchanan and Milton, and demonstrated the divine rights of kings to tyrannize and oppress mankind."—*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*, p. 314

† See Prior's *Life of Burke*, vol. ii. p. 100, et seq. See also Bisset's *Life of Burke*, p. 461, et seq. The *Reflections* were published at five shillings, and the price never reduced.

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tion. Such partizans did not affect to enter profoundly into the merits of the work they were anxious to decry; their attacks were confined to phrases and expressions, their illustrations were gross and clumsy fictions, and their reasoning was comprised in lofty, incoherent, and inapplicable declamations. Thus, they took hold of the "age of chivalry" as if no knight had ever existed but Don Quixote, and no other image seemed to predominate in their minds but that of an old man on a broken-down horse, with a long staff armed with iron in his hand, and a barber's bason on his head, raving about some imaginary mistress, and prepared in her cause to combat windmills, flocks of sheep, droves of oxen, or whatever else might come in his way. The phrase "swinish multitude," although purely figurative and not original*, and applied by Mr. Burke in a very limited sense, was selected as the means of inflaming the ardent and biassing the inconsiderate; it was represented as having a general application to all who moved in inferior stations; and the arts employed on this subject were so effectual, that, for many years, the words "swinish multitude" formed a sort of alarum to sedition, and their effect is not yet exhausted. Monarchs were represented as clinging to Burke for the preservation of their power, nobles for their distinctions and titles, clergymen for their tithes, and misers for their money.

He is answered
by many.

Attacks of more force and better-sustained were not withheld. A numerous host expressed in pamphlets their hostile opinions. Many of these were anonymous; many from persons so obscure, and in a style so little capable of doing real benefit to any cause, that it would be inexcusable even to give them the moment's life which is conferred by the pronouncement of a name†. The first pamphlet which appeared was from the pen of Dr. Priestley‡; but its chief object was to vindicate his friend Dr. Price.

* See Prior's Life of Burke, vol. ii. p. 117.

† In this observation, it cannot be supposed that such men as Dr. Towers, Mr. Capel Loft, and Earl Stanhope, are meant to be included.

‡ Bisset's Life of Burke, p. 517.

Two other writers who engaged in this controversy deserve more particular notice. The first is Mr. Thomas Paine, whose exertions during the American war have already been mentioned*. After the conclusion of that contest, he remained in quiet obscurity, until his hopes of public notice were revived by the progress of the French revolution. He expected discussion in England, for in France he could not have made himself understood; and as soon as Mr. Burke's intended publication was announced, he promised to answer it†.

This general and uncompromising undertaking he performed in a tract, which he intitled "The Rights of Man." Of this work it is little to the discredit of its ill-educated author to say, that it presents no graces or charms of composition to rival the style of the individual whom he selected for an opponent; it does not possess even the merit of being always correct in grammar; but it evinces a mind endowed with strong powers of reasoning, be his arguments right or wrong.

It begins by complaining of the abuse lavished by Mr. Burke on the French nation and its legislators; and on Dr. Price, "one of the best-hearted men that lives," for his sermon "on the Anniversary of what is called, in England, the Revolution, which took place in 1688." He combats Mr. Burke's opinions on the settlement of the crown, not by the authority of grave and wise writers on philosophy, politics, or history, but by reading the words of the legislature in a different sense, and by asserting that the present race of mankind could not be bound by any declaration made a hundred years ago. Not on ancient or learned authors does he rely, but on M. de Lafayette. Instead of referring, he says, to musty records and mouldy parchments to prove that the rights of the living are lost, "renounced and abdicated for ever," by those who are now no more, as Mr. Burke has done, M. de Lafayette applies to the living world, and emphatically says, "Call to mind the sentiments which Nature has

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The Rights of
Man, by Tho-
mas Paine.

* Chapter Twenty-nine.

† Preface to the Rights of Man, part I.

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“ engraved in the heart of every citizen, and which
“ take a new force when they are solemnly recognized
“ by all: for a nation to love liberty, it is sufficient
“ that she knows it; and to be free, it is sufficient that
“ she wills it.” How dry, barren, and obscure, is the
source from which Mr. Burke labours! and how ineffectual, though gay with flowers, are all his declamation and his arguments, compared with these clear, concise, and soul-animating sentiments! Few and short as they are, they lead on to a vast field of generous and manly thinking, and do not finish, like Mr. Burke’s periods, with “ music in the ear, and nothing
“ in the heart.”

He talked of the “ Quixote age of chivalry nonsense.” As to the horrors, the astonishment was that the revolution was marked with so few sacrifices, considering that principles, not persons, were the objects of destruction. He went through the narrative of supposed plots against the patriots, the proceedings which led to the taking of the Bastille; and also those which occasioned the events in October; always advancing the popular fables, and vindicating every portion of these appalling proceedings.

Mr. Paine then addressed himself to the consideration of the natural and civil rights of man, which he defined in this manner: “ Natural rights are those
“ which appertain to man in the right of his existence.
“ Of this kind are all the intellectual rights, or rights
“ of the mind, and also of those rights of acting, as
“ an individual, for his own comfort and happiness,
“ which are not injurious to the natural rights of
“ others.—Civil rights are those which appertain to
“ man in right of his being a member of society. Every
“ civil right has for its foundation some natural right
“ pre-existing in the individual, but to the enjoyment
“ of which his individual power is not, in all cases,
“ sufficiently competent. Of this kind are all those
“ which relate to security and protection.”

Governments were to be ranged under three heads: Superstition; Power; and the common interest of society, and the rights of man: the first two, united,

asserted the doctrine of divine rights, and formed the union called Church and State. The key of Saint Peter and the key of the treasury became quartered on one another, and the wondering, cheated multitude worshiped the invention.

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On these themes he entered into a long series of dissertations, to shew that the situation of France was infinitely preferable to that of England; for, as a constitution was a real, not an ideal existence, France had one to produce, England had not. In like manner, he reviewed all the social institutions of the two countries; maintaining that, in the representative system, in the destruction of prerogative, in the abolition of nobility, in the seizure of the property of the clergy, France was intitled to a distinguished preference. He lauded very highly the philosophical writers from whom the revolution had received its impulse; and related, in his own manner, without novelty or beauty, the circumstances which led to the assembling of the States-general.

He speaks of the confusion and contradiction of Mr. Burke's book, and terms his arguments on hereditary rights and hereditary succession, nonsense; some of them he calls learned jargon, which he translates into an unlearned jargon, but neither explains nor refutes. The opinions of men, with respect to government, he observes, are "changing fast in all countries. The revolutions of America and France have thrown a beam of light over the world, which reaches into man. The enormous expense of governments has provoked people to think, by making them feel: and when once the veil begins to rend, it admits not of repair."

In ridicule of nobility, he says, "Titles are but nick-names, and every nick-name is a title. It reduces man into the diminutive of things which are great; and the counterfeit of woman into things that are little. It talks about its fine blue ribbon like a girl, and shews its new garter like a child. France has overgrown the baby-cloaths of count and duke, and breeched itself into manhood. Through all the

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“ vocabulary of Adam (he proceeds) there is not such
 “ an animal as a duke or a count, neither can we con-
 “ nect any certain idea with the words. Whether
 “ they mean strength or weakness, wisdom or folly, a
 “ child or a man, or the rider or the horse, is all equi-
 “ vocal. Imagination has given figure and character
 “ to centaurs, satyrs, and down to the fairy tribe; but
 “ titles baffle even the powers of fancy, and are a chi-
 “ merical non-descript.”

On the subject of monarchy, his opinions are, that it cannot be hereditary; no particular family can have a right to establish itself; and if a nation were to establish a particular family, it would have a direct tendency to despotism: best of all it would be, if there were no monarchy. “ After all, “ he says, “ what is this metaphor called a crown, or rather what is monarchy? Is it a thing, or is it a name, or is it a fraud? Is it ‘a contrivance of human wisdom,’ or of human craft to obtain money from a nation under specious pretences? If it is necessary, in what does that necessity consist; what services does it perform, what is its business, and what are its merits? Doth the virtue consist in the metaphor, or in the man? Doth the goldsmith that makes the crown, make the virtue also? Doth it operate like Fortunatus’s wishing cap, or Harlequin’s wooden sword? Doth it make a man a conjuror? In fine, what is it? It appears to be a something going much out of fashion, falling into ridicule, and rejected in some countries, both as unnecessary and expensive. In America it is considered as an absurdity; and in France it has so far declined, that the goodness of the man, and the respect for his personal character, are the only things that preserve the appearance of its existence.”

Mr. Paine then reviews the financial state of the two countries, depreciating that of England and highly vaunting that of France; he computes, from the statement of M. Necker, and a learned political English writer, Mr. George Chalmers, the quantity of gold and silver possessed by each nation; but, with extraordinary forbearance, never mentions the word assignats;

never refers to that copious addition to the wealth of France.

In a portion of this essay, which he calls the conclusion, he observes: "The two modes of government which prevail in the world, are, first, government by election and representation: secondly, government by hereditary succession. The former is generally known by the name of Republic; the latter, by that of Monarchy and Aristocracy, and erect themselves on the two distinct and opposite bases of reason and ignorance. As it is not difficult to perceive," he adds, "from the enlightened state of mankind, that hereditary governments are verging to their decline, and that revolutions, on the broad basis of national sovereignty, and government by representation, are making their way in Europe, it would be an act of wisdom to anticipate their approach, and produce revolutions by reason and accommodation, rather than commit them to the issue of convulsions*."

It was not to be expected that such a work, at the period when it was published, could produce any general effect in England, although, to stimulate curiosity, it was given out that government had suppressed the publication. For the applause of men well educated, the style was too low, coarse, rude, and even ungrammatical; for those who were not so endowed, the matter was often too quaint, too pedantic, too ignorantly

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Its effect.

* In his eagerness to defame Mr. Burke, this author does not think it necessary to confine himself within the limits of truth. "Mr. Burke," he says, "appears to have no idea of principles, when he is contemplating Government." "Ten years ago," says he, "I could have felicitated France on her having a government, without enquiring what the nature of that government was, or how it was administered." Is this, he exclaims, "the language of a rational man? Is this the language of a man, feeling, as he ought to feel, for the rights and happiness of the human race? It is power and not principles that Mr. Burke venerates; and under this abominable depravity he is disqualified to judge." All this is mere voluntary falsehood, for it could not be mistake or misapprehension. Mr. Burke's observation is, "The circumstances are what render every civil and political scheme beneficial or noxious to mankind. Abstractedly speaking, government, as well as liberty, is good; yet could I, in common sense, ten years ago, have felicitated France on her enjoyment of a government (for she then had a government), without knowing what the nature of that government was, or how it was administered." Such was the sentence so shamelessly falsified and so vehemently decried; yet, open as it lies to detection, the falsehood passed unnoticed, until the publication of an Address to the Friends of the People, by Professor Wilde of Edinburgh, in 1792. See the Address, p. 64: also Biographical Memoirs of the French Revolution, vol. ii. p. 300.

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elaborate. Yet such a work could not be published without some effect. Gross ribaldry, cast on high institutions; unmannerly jests, uttered against men in eminent station, and against the station itself; the prostration of those who were exalted; and the undefined resources supposed to be found in a sordid and degrading economy; all these were bribes for approbation not to be resisted by the selfish, the proud, the envious, the thoughtless, and the clamorous, who always make up a considerable portion of those who in common assemblages bear powerful sway. Besides, a man, comparatively uneducated, measuring himself against a scholar and orator so renowned as Mr. Burke, won, by that circumstance alone, the goodwill of many who love enterprize if it seems daring, and sympathize with an adventurer who advances boldly to a contest with arms and means evidently inadequate. Thus, many, who would have turned with indifference from an essay by a great leader in political, or a great oracle in legal or statistical knowledge, hugged to their hearts with delight the effusions of him, whom, in fond familiarity, they termed "Tom Paine*."

Vindiciæ
Gallicæ, by
Mr. Mackin-
tosh.

Very different in acquired knowledge and literary pretensions was Mr. Mackintosh, the author of another answer to Mr. Burke, under the title of "*Vindiciæ Gallicæ*." He divided his answer into five sections, in which he considered, first, the general expediency and necessity of a revolution in France; secondly, the composition and character of the National Assembly; thirdly, the popular excesses which accompanied or followed the revolution; fourthly, the new constitution of France; and, last, the conduct of its English admirers.

In the first of these sections, he reviewed the history of France, to shew that a revolution was absolutely necessary; and, from the despotism of Louis the Fourteenth to the present time, he presented a view of government, finances, and proceedings, calcu-

* These observations apply entirely to the first part of the *Rights of Man*.

lated to justify his doctrine, that a destruction, and not a correction, of the civil order in France could alone be useful. It will not be attempted to pursue the whole train of his assertions or arguments, but merely to extract some leading propositions. Having vindicated the double representation of the tiers état, he observes, that, in a great revolution, every expedient ought to facilitate change. In an established government, every thing ought to render it difficult. Hence the division of a legislature, which, in an established government, may give a beneficial stability to the laws, must, in a moment of revolution, be proportionably injurious, by fortifying abuse and unnerving reform. The soldiers who joined the popular cause, and whom Mr. Burke stigmatizes as base hiringling deserters, were considered by Mr. Mackintosh as men whom posterity will celebrate for patriotic heroism. To introduce this strange eulogy, he advanced as facts propositions for which there was no warrant, beyond the harangues of the mob-orators; and he slurred over the conduct of the troops, seduced, as they notoriously were, by money, brandy, and women, furnished by the popular party.

The National Assembly, which had been convoked as an ordinary legislation, under existing laws, were transformed by these events into a national convention, and vested with powers to organize a government. Having thus invested them with, what he is pleased to call, an unlimited trust, the author proceeds to consider, not alone the extirpation of the feudal system, and the abrogation of the civil and criminal code, but the destruction of the three great corporations,—the nobility, the church, and the parliaments. The legislature had pronounced the existence of orders repugnant to the principles of social union, and their panegyrist states that they were incapable of alliance with a free constitution, being tainted by the despotism of which they were members or instruments. They monopolized the rewards and offices of the state, while the people were degraded to political helotism.

On the subject of the church, the second great

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corporation that sustained the French despotism, this author vindicates all the proceedings of the Assembly. The general tendency of his argument is that which can alone be advanced in such a cause, that, in the endowments made on them, the church had only a semblance of property, the real right was in the state. From the history of former times he adduced the conclusion, that the priesthood are servilely devoted when they are weak, and dangerously ambitious when strong. In a state of feebleness, they are dangerous to liberty; possessed of power, they are dangerous to civil government itself; and he predicted that, unless some revolution, auspicious to priestcraft, should replunge Europe into ignorance, church power would certainly not survive the nineteenth century.

By similar reasoning, he justified the overthrow of the judicial aristocracy; the parliaments, not less than the church, were incompatible with liberty. But even if it were otherwise, and reform might have been possible, legislators were under no obligation to retain a constitution because it had been found "tolerably to answer the common purposes of government." It is absurd to expect, but it is not absurd to pursue, perfection.

In his second division, the composition and character of the National Assembly, Mr. Mackintosh makes the incorrect observation that the French revolution might truly be said to have been a revolution without leaders. That it was without visible and ostensible leaders, is true; that arose from the base pusillanimity of the real chief; but he was nevertheless the chief; and he had under him many subordinate leaders. But, in answer to Mr. Burke, it is truly said, that the representation of the third estate was composed of lawyers, physicians, merchants, men of letters, tradesmen, and farmers. The choice was indeed limited by necessity; for, except men of those ranks and professions, the people had no objects of election, the army and the church being engrossed by the nobility. "No vestige of the landed interest of the country appeared in this representation." For an obvious reason,—because

the nobility of France, like the gentry of England, formed almost exclusively the landed interest of the kingdom. He raised beyond its true standard the respectability of the French provincial lawyers; and in explaining that the clergy returned did not deserve the contemptuous designation of country curates, he elevated them to the rank of rectors, and denied that there was in the proceedings of the Assembly any tendency toward the establishment of atheism by the ruin of the church. He ventured also to assert that the assignats, supported in their credit by the rapid sale of the property which they represented, had kept almost at par, that the price of the necessities of life had lowered, and the sufferings of the indigent had been considerably alleviated. The evils of their emission were transient, the beneficial effects permanent.

In terms, and in a style of argument which do no credit to his understanding or to his heart, Mr. Mackintosh then proceeds, not merely to palliate, but to justify what he calls the popular excesses of the times. He begins with an axiom, inapplicable at least, if not untrue, that no great revolution can be accomplished without excesses and miseries at which humanity revolts. It was a present evil incurred for a future good, and the sensibility which shrinks at it is not a virtue, for it is not a quality beneficial to mankind: it would arrest the arm of a surgeon in amputating a gangrened limb, or the hand of a judge in signing the sentence of a parricide. It might be necessary, he said, to remind England of the price she paid for the establishment at the revolution. The disputed succession, which arose from that event, produced a destructive civil war in Ireland, two rebellions in Scotland, the consequent slaughter and banishment of thousands of citizens, with the widest confiscation of their properties. The freedom of America was purchased by calamities still more inevitable.

If such arguments could be tolerated at all, it would hardly be admitted that the sanguinary murder of unprotected individuals, the burning of their property, where no resistance was attempted, fell within

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any rule of philosophical morality ; or, if a balance could be struck as to the comparative loss or crime which attended revolutions, few would consider that the destruction of hostile foes in manly conflict, or even the punishment of rebels according to the course of law, and after trial, could be compared to the premeditated, interested, cold-blooded assassinations which disgraced and characterized the proceedings in France. Or, as if the sum total of a conflict which lasted sixty years, or of another which comprised seven years of active warfare, and in which the greatest nations in the world took a part, could be opposed to events, for there was no struggle, purely domestic, which had existed less than two years. Nor is it necessary to mention the mutilation of carcasses and the parade of blood-dropping heads and members through streets and towns, as circumstances for which no parallel is found in the annals of our country. Mr. Mackintosh, indeed, considers them lightly : " From these circumstances," he says, " arose many calamities in the provinces. The country " houses of many gentlemen were burnt, and some " obnoxious persons were assassinated." The legislators, it is said, did not command these atrocities : did they take any measures to prevent or punish, or did they sanction them by their applause, and by the murderous question, whether the blood which had been shed was over pure ?

Pursuing his strain of vindication, the learned author treats the accounts of Gallic horrors as having been widely, malignantly, and systematicall'y exaggerated ; but he produces no instance, and contents himself with opposing to what he calls this host of falsehoods, the general fact that no commercial house of importance had failed since the revolution. France was at peace with all the world, her colonies untouched, her manufactures unimpeached, either in the production or the export ; the revolution did not as yet aim at commerce or commercial men ; the power and influence of great cities were the very means and support of the revolution, and then it was inferred that no considerable horrors had attended the event, because no

great commercial failures were disclosed. Like Mr. Paine, he is very indignant that Mr. Burke had termed the Bastille the King's castle at Paris. Mr. Burke never justified the use which, in former times, had been made of it as a state prison; nor did he warm into rapture at the treachery which surrendered, or the barbarities which distinguished its capture; he was not philosopher enough to use the language of Mr. Mackintosh, and call the barbarous and cowardly murder of its governor, "summary justice, executed on a titled ruffian."

With arguments equally fallacious, and with the aid of assertions, obviously and notoriously incorrect, he vindicates the horrors of October. The incursion of the rabble on Versailles was not premeditated: the forcible conveyance of the King to Paris was indispensable. The name, the person, and the authority of the King, would have been most formidable weapons in the hands of their adversaries. The peace of their country, the stability of their freedom, called on them to use every measure that could prevent their enemies from getting possession of that "royal figure." As to the Queen, he said that, in a period much nearer to the meridian of chivalry, greater wrongs had been inflicted in the country of Sir Philip Sydney on Mary Queen of Scots! At the same time, this author did not permit himself to vent any ribaldry against the age of chivalry, but spoke of it with temper and proper consideration.

In reviewing the constitution of France, Mr. Mackintosh enters into a laudatory discussion of every part; but to analyze his opinions on this head, is now, for obvious reasons, little worth the labour. On general principles and particular regulations, he differed much from Mr. Burke; but he wrote at a time when the code had been completed*; his opponent at a period when only the rights of man had been declared, and certain fundamental enactments decreed. In one point, that which relates to the final ascendancy of a military com-

* The third edition of Mr. Mackintosh's book, which has been followed here, was produced in August, 1791.

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mander, Mr. Mackintosh says:—The army of four millions of citizens will prevent any alarm from the regular or professional soldiery. In the present state of France, the national guard is a sufficient bulwark against the army, should it relapse into its ancient habits; and in its future state, nobody, susceptible of such dangerous habits, seems likely to exist. “*Gallos quoque in bellis floruisse audivimus*,” may indeed be the sentiment of our children.

An ample section is devoted to the vindication of the English admirers, and particularly Dr. Price; but it contains little that is new, and less that is ingenious or striking. A paragraph is introduced, comparing the indictment against Algernon Sydney, and Lord Chief Justice Jefferies’s charge to the jury, to some of Mr. Burke’s observations on the Old Jewry sermon; and the writer protects himself against the imputation of adopting the notions of the French legislators in all their extent. “But nothing (he says) can be more absurd than to assert, that all who admire, wish to imitate the French revolution. The conduct of nations is to vary with the circumstances in which they are placed; and there is no inconsistency in looking on France, not to model our conduct, but to invigorate the spirit of freedom.”

In a chapter, intitled Speculations on the probable Consequences of the French Revolution in Europe, Mr. Mackintosh contemplates with satisfaction the probability that the principles on which it is founded will be rapidly diffused. The example of France must have a mighty influence on the subjects of despotic states. The Gothic governments of Europe have lived their time. The courts of Europe, he said, have in various modes paid the homage of their fears to the French revolution. The King of Spain and the Pope, however fortified in their dominion by priestcraft and the ignorance of the people, trembled for its duration. Even the mild and temperate aristocracies of Switzerland seemed to apprehend the arrival of that period, when men would not be content to owe the benefits of government to the fortuitous character of

their governors, but to the intrinsic excellence of its constitution. The unsuccessful struggle of Liege, and the theocratic insurrection of Brabant, had left behind them traces of a patriotic party, whom a more favourable moment might call into more successful action. The despotic court of the Hague was betraying alarms like those every where discernible, which were the most evident symptoms of the approaching downfall of the European despotisms. Of the effects of the controversy in England, he appeared to form sanguine expectations. Priestcraft and toryism were supported only by literary advocates of the most miserable description. But they were abundantly sustained by auxiliaries of another kind—the interested and the prejudiced.—Judges forgot the dignity of their function; priests the mildness of their religion; the Bench, which should have spoken with the serene temper of justice the pulpit, whence should have issued only the healing sounds of charity, were prostituted to party purposes, and polluted with invectives against freedom. A clamour which had for half a century lain dormant was revived—The church was in danger!—The church was in danger! The spirit of persecution was aroused, and the friends of freedom were to be overwhelmed as Dissenters. “We are, however,” he concludes, “only concerned in these facts, as they are
“evidence from our enemies of the probable progress
“of freedom. The probability of that progress they
“all conspire to prove. The briefs of the Pope, and
“the pamphlets of Mr. Burke, the edicts of the
“Spanish Court, and the mandates of the Spanish In-
“quisition, the Birmingham rioters, and the Oxford
“graduates, equally render to liberty the involuntary
“homage of their alarms.”

Were these publications to be considered merely Observations.
as the political declamations of the supporters of rival or opposed parties, the lengthened notice of them would be inexcusable; but they are, in fact, the declarations or creeds by which mankind denoted their opinions and regulated their conduct; they were referred to as authority by the supporters of hostile sys-

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tems; they furnished, during many years, topics of accusation, reproach, or defence to the adherents of every party; a paragraph, a phrase, or even a word, selected from either was used to denote and classify political sectaries; and in all debates, from those of the senate to the humblest assemblage, the tenets of these three writers were quoted, supported or oppugned, according to the taste or the political bias of the speaker. Mr. Burke, of course, was relied on by those who wished to see the hereditary monarchy and nobility of England maintained in their accustomed authority, influence, and splendour; the church in its dignity, opulence, and power; property in its sacred inviolability, whatever might be the form in which it was invested; the representation preserved from innovations, which could not produce good, but were pregnant with confusion and mischief; and all legal establishments guarded from destructive encroachment, although they might be left open to the efforts of beneficial correction. Mr. Paine affected the very reverse of these opinions; not only hereditary sovereignty and nobility, but any such institutions, were to him odious: the church was an object of detestation and ridicule, and its supposed property only a deposit, to be reclaimed at any time; the representation of the people was a mere political fraud, tending to spoliation, corruption, and oppression; and the institutions in general so open to abuse, that a total alteration of them could alone be useful. Mr. Mackintosh was considered as placing himself between the two extremes. He disclaimed against the inheritance of the crown, but not against royalty; he did not expressly advocate the destruction of nobility, although it was obvious that it could not subsist if his observations on the subject of orders were adopted; toward the church and its property, the representation, and the established system, he shewed as much, if not more, rancour than Mr. Paine himself*.

* It would be unjust, after displaying them so amply, to omit observing one striking distinction between the two writers opposed to Mr. Burke. Mr. Paine, humbly born, imperfectly educated, and little, if at all, used to good society, treats

Except the fermentation occasioned by these discussions, there was nothing in the domestic affairs of England to occasion any particular feeling in the public mind.

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Domestic
tranquillity.

Mr. Burke with harshness, rudeness, almost with contempt; considering, perhaps, that such is the mode in which a political antagonist ought to be assailed; but he does not abuse or vilify any other person. The most uncivil expressions used by him are against the Count de Broglie, whom he styles "a high-flying aristocrat," "cool and capable of every mischief!" and he calls M. de Vergennes "an aristocratical despot." Mr. Mackintosh, with every advantage of education, and benefit of higher association, sensible, perhaps, that expressions of contumely used toward Mr. Burke would recoil most violently on himself, mentions his talents, his oratorical and his personal character with great respect, even when most vigorously opposing his opinions; but, toward all other persons, he shews a coarse, barbarous, and malignant hostility, which neither age, sex, nor calamity can mitigate, and which is never called for to invigorate the argument or ratify the assertion. Thus, as already has been mentioned, the unfortunate Governor of the Bastille, without a word of censure on his murderers, is termed a "titled ruffian" (p. 177). M. de Calonne, dragged into the controversy as an auxiliary, because Mr. Burke quotes one of his publications, is stigmatized for exhibiting to the eyes of indignant Europe the spectacle of an exiled robber, living in the most splendid impunity, and, with an effrontery that beggars invective, assuming in his work the tone of afflicted patriotism, and delivering polluted philippics as the oracles of persecuted virtue. (Introduction, p. x.). On the Royal Family, he observes, that "The sensibility which seems scared by the homely miseries of the vulgar, is attracted only by the splendid sorrows of royalty, and agonizes at the slenderest pang which assails the heart of sottishness or prostitution, if they are placed by fortune on a throne." (Same, p. v.). In another passage, disgraceful for its extreme grossness, placing the Queen of France on a line with Doll Tearsheet, he says "The Comte d'Artois, that scion worthy of Henry the Great, the rival of the Bayards and Sidneys, the new model of French knighthood, is to issue from Turin, with ten thousand cavaliers, to deliver the peerless and immaculate Antoinetta from the *durance rite* in which she has so long been immured in the Thuilleries, from the swords of the discourteous knights of Paris, and the spells of the sable wizards of democracy." (Same, p. xiii). Without multiplying instances, it may be sufficient to observe that such ribaldry, the mere echo of the defamations of the Palais Royal, and the howlings of the poissardes, is utterly unworthy of a scholar and a gentleman; and it is strange to see it used by one who reprehends Mr. Burke for having written a contemptuous passage, outrageously offensive to candour and urbanity, reflecting on an opinion about church lands, said to have originated in M. Turgot. The name of that philosopher, economist, and encyclopedist, was too well known to be treated with reserve, had it been used or even alluded to by Mr. Burke, which it was not; and as he had long been dead, his acts or opinions belonged to the public, and might be discussed, or censured, without injury to any one. In an advertisement to his third edition, Mr. Mackintosh says, "I have been accused, by valuable friends, of treating with ungenerous levity the misfortunes of the Royal Family of France. They will not however suppose me capable of deliberately violating the sacredness of misery, in a palace or a cottage; and I sincerely lament that I should have been betrayed into expressions which admitted that construction." It is difficult to conceive the meaning of this apology; it is easily to be understood that tautology, or a false concord, or any other mistake in rhetoric or grammar, may have escaped the pen of an ardent writer; but how a man can deliberately be betrayed into writing disgraceful sentiments, correcting the press twice without altering them, and only finding them out at last through the information of valuable friends, is not to be comprehended. The author vindicates himself by an appeal to his general character; but the facts are not to be changed, and his expressions are quoted above from the very edition which contains his apology, and in which he has not mitigated them by a marginal note, or an intimation of doubt in the text. On this point, the sentiments of one, who was at least as good

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General
election.
June 12th.

Mr. Pitt.

Unimproved
state of the
opposition.Lord North
succeeds to a
peerage.

August 4th.

Soon after the prorogation, Parliament was dissolved. This measure occasioned no surprise; it had been foreseen and avowed. Had the House of Commons been continued until its legal expiration, its existence would have terminated at a most inconvenient period, in the middle of a session, and during the full progress of business, public and private. Ministers had nothing to fear from an appeal to the people. The character of Mr. Pitt, which was principally regarded, had risen in every struggle in which he had engaged; he had come from every trial, not only unharmed, but with the graces of triumph; and his adversaries, frustrated in the senate, could assail him only in witty satires. The opposition, on the contrary, had not gained any advantage in the public estimation. Not to look too far backward, it may suffice to observe that the late discussions concerning the regency had not advanced them in the general estimation, while their connexion with Carlton House, and the equivocal situation of Mrs. Fitzherbert, exposed them to much suspicion and obloquy. One conspicuous member of that body was no longer to instruct the lower House by his knowledge, illumine it with his wit, or charm it with his never-failing urbanity. Lord North, on the death of his father, succeeded to the title, and, for the residue of his life, sat in the upper House as Earl of Guildford. His son, the Honourable George Augustus, now called Lord North, was returned for Petersfield. The trial of Mr. Hastings, on which so ample a portion of their labour was bestowed, and so much eloquence displayed, produced no corresponding senti-

a scholar, and at least as persevering and consistent a Whig as Mr. Mackintosh, are worthy of attention: "He that denies," Doctor Parr observes, "the existence of that peculiar veneration and peculiar pity which nature has implanted in the heart of man towards sovereigns in distress, is a shallow philosopher; and he, who by delusive abstractions, or visionary refinements, would weaken their efficacy, is a mischievous member of society. Kings may indeed be slain in battle, led away captive into foreign lands, deposed, and even in some cases destroyed, by their own subjects, and yet we can often read of their misfortunes without very strong and painful emotions. But if insult be added to injury, and, in the giddiness of success, the low and the worthless trample upon the mighty, the conscious dignity of human nature rushes upon our minds, and we become deeply interested in favour of those who have been hurled from the highest pinnacle of power, and stripped of the gorgeous emblems in which grandeur is wont to be arrayed." Works, vol. v. p. 549.

ments in the public, who felt no sympathy with the managers, and considered the proceeding merely as a law-suit most dreadfully protracted.

Prepared as both parties were, vigorous contests for seats were maintained in some parts of the kingdom; but little interest was felt in the event. The Dissenters attempted to create an interest by requiring from candidates a promissory obligation; but little effect was produced. Lord John Townshend retired from the representation of Westminster, and it was expected that Mr. Fox and Lord Hood would have been returned without a contest; but they found an unexpected opponent in Mr. John Horne Tooke, who, although he had taken clerical orders, and was therefore supposed to be disqualified, and although unsupported by any party, or by any individual possessing great wealth or influence, except Lieutenant-general Melville, maintained the conflict fifteen days, and polled sixteen hundred and ninety-seven votes. His speeches on the hustings enhanced his character as a wit, and established it as an orator*.

On the meeting of the new Parliament, Mr. Ad-
dington was called to the chair without opposition.

In opening the session, the King stated the termination of differences with Spain, and promised the proper documents and estimates of expenses. He also mentioned the pacification between Austria and the Porte, and between Russia and Sweden: he lamented the continuance of war between Russia and Turkey; but said that the principles on which he had hitherto acted would make him always desirous of employing the weight and influence of this country in

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Contests for
seats.

June 14th.
Mr. Horne
Tooke stands
for West-
minster.

1790.
Nov. 25th.
King's speech.

26th.

* Mr. Fox polled 3516; Lord Hood, 3217. It may be sufficient to state here, without returning to the subject, that Mr. Horne Tooke presented a petition against Mr. Fox's return, which was pronounced an outrage upon decency and a libel upon Parliament. It was however read from the chair, and referred to a committee under the Grenville act. Before this tribunal the petitioner behaved with singular indecorum; and, as he substantiated no allegation he had made, the petition was voted to be frivolous and vexatious. Refusing to pay the costs, an action was brought by Mr. Fox; the defendant pleaded his own cause with great vigour and ability; but, after much delay on the part of the jury, a verdict was given against him. See the Parliamentary History, December 9th, 1790, and 5th February, 1791. See also Memoirs of John Horne Tooke, by Alexander Stephens, vol. ii. p. 83 to 109.

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Address in
the Lords.

contributing to the restoration of general peace. In conclusion, his Majesty adverted to an interruption which had taken place in the tranquillity of our Indian possessions, in consequence of the unprovoked attack on an ally of the British nation; but all circumstances afforded the most favourable prospect of bringing the contest to a speedy and successful conclusion. He also recommended the affairs of Quebec to particular attention.

Earl Poulet moved the address, and was seconded, in a very able speech, by the Earl of Hardwicke; the motion passed unanimously, although Earl Stanhope thought fit to introduce a subject which the King and both the preceding speakers had avoided,—the affairs of France, with some remarks on a recent publication. Peace, he said, under divine Providence, was to be attributed to the French revolution, and nothing could tend more to make it permanent than a steady and well-formed alliance with that great and free country. But a publication by M. de Calonne, which he termed “an atrocious work,” had created sedition in France, and was a gross libel on the King of England. These observations produced no answer.

30th.
In the
Commons.

In the House of Commons, the address was moved by Mr. Mainwaring, who was still member for Middlesex, although a change in the representation had taken place by the rejection of the once popular and celebrated John Wilkes. Mr. Reginald Pole Carew seconded the motion, in a short, temperate, and prudent speech. The mention of Nootka Sound afforded Sir John Jervis an opportunity, and he availed himself of it with characteristic zeal and frankness, of praising the navy, both officers and men, for the skill and readiness they had evinced.

Mr Fox.

It occurred that, in the course of his speech, Mr. Carew mentioned the Netherlands, remarking that it was always the interest and duty of this country to apply its weight and influence to prevent the increasing power of any one state which might be prompted by overweening ambition to disturb the general tranquillity of Europe. Mr. Fox said that the danger ad-

verted to, and a phrase concerning the Netherlands in the King's speech, could allude only to France; and, after discussing, at some length, the nature and effect of treaties by which the sovereignty of the Netherlands was guaranteed to Austria, he added, that whatever opinions might be entertained on that point, all must agree that we had no danger to dread from France at present more than formerly, but rather much less, on a great variety of accounts. Possibly the language of this part of the speech was intended only to express the King's benevolent desire to see peace generally maintained.

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1790.

Mr. Pitt, in answering these observations, avoided all dangerous and inflammatory topics, but yet manfully professed his intention to maintain the honour of the country, by adhering to treaties. No amendment being moved, the address was unanimously voted.

Mr. Pitt.

Copies of the convention with Spain, respecting Nootka Sound, with some explanatory papers, being presented, Mr. Grey moved for additional documents; but the debate produced nothing which could add to the information already given, and the motion was negatived on a division*. The address of thanks and congratulation to his Majesty was moved in the upper House by the Duke of Montrose; and, on a division, a motion by Lord Rawdon for the previous question was rejected†. A like motion for an address from the lower House, made by Mr. Duncombe, was carried, on a question of adjournment moved by Mr. Stanley‡.

Dec. 12th.
Debates on
Nootka Sound.

13th.

14th.

It was found that the expense of the armament against Spain greatly exceeded the vote of credit: instead of one, it was nearly three millions. Mr. Pitt, having stated this fact, said, the first resource he should suggest would raise no inconsiderable portion of the sum wanted. It was the balance of the issues of public money for particular purposes which had accumulated in the Bank from unpaid dividends. As mere agents, they had no right to retain a greater ba-

15th.
Appropriation
of unclaimed
dividends.

* It was the first which took place in the new parliament, and highly favourable to ministers. 258 to 134.

† 73 to 30.

‡ 247 to 123.

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LXIX.

1791.

New taxes.

lance than might be sufficient to answer probable demands ; and, as they had a considerable allowance for their agency, they were not intitled to an indirect profit from an unnecessary balance. He proposed, therefore, to take for public use, five hundred thousand pounds, for which the consolidated fund would be answerable, leaving one hundred and sixty thousand for current service and the discharge of old arrears. His next object was to propose such temporary imposts as might produce a discharge of the whole in four years : these were taxes on sugar and spirits ; an additional duty of threepence per bushel on malt ; and, with certain exceptions, ten per cent. on the assessed taxes.

20th.

In general, the minister's plan met the approbation of his usual opponents ; but the tax on malt, and the appropriation of the unclaimed dividends, occasioned discussions. Mr. Martin suggested that a tax on dogs, which he had proposed some years before, might be substituted for the malt tax ; but the original motion was carried*.

March 15.
Petition.

Against the bill for appropriating unclaimed dividends, Mr. Thornton produced a petition from the governor and company of the Bank, shewing, in many points of view, the inconvenience and impropriety of the measure ; and the petition referred to was confirmed by a letter signed by several eminent merchants, proprietors of stock, and agents for many respectable foreigners, who viewed the proposed measure as a violation of the public faith. A motion of adjournment was rejected, and one for committing the bill passed, by great majorities†. Still, as it appeared that some injury might ensue to public credit if the whole sum were removed from the custody of the Bank, it was arranged, as a compromise, that the nation should accept that required sum as a loan, without interest, on condition that a sufficient balance of the public money should at all times remain in the Bank ; and that their annual allowance for management of four hundred and

* 126 to 91.

† 172 to 82, and 191 to 82.

fifty pounds on every million of the public debt should continue. A list was immediately published for the information of those intitled to dividends, by which justice was done to many, while no material diminution of the balance in the Bank was effected.

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On the motion of Mr. Pitt, a select committee of nine members was appointed to inquire into the state of public income and expenditure, and on the probable amount in future years. In a long and particular report, the Committee gave a satisfactory and encouraging view of the public finance. The receipt appeared to have advanced progressively, while the expenditure was in a state which allowed the hope of gradual reduction; and the diminution of the national debt was proceeding in a manner conformable to the views of the minister and the hopes of Parliament.

April 18.
Committee on
public finance.

May 10.
Report.

When their report came under consideration in a committee of the whole House, Mr. Sheridan attacked it in every part, and moved thirty-nine adverse resolutions, which were discussed during two days, and in general negatived or withdrawn, seven having been admitted with alterations and amendments. As the forms of the House did not allow that resolutions moved in a committee should appear on the journals, and as it was the particular desire, perhaps the only hope, of the honourable mover that they should be so recorded, he proposed them again when the Speaker had resumed the chair; the report was then brought up and agreed to, Mr. Sheridan's resolutions being all disposed of, by motions for the previous question, except the last, which was negatived on a division*.

Mr. Sheridan
moves resolu-
tions.

June 3.

6, 7.

Generally ne-
gatived.

After the Christmas recess, the first business which engaged the attention of Parliament was the abolition of the slave trade. Since the last discussions, the favourers of this reform had been indefatigable, and the state of public proceedings led one of their travellers to Paris†. In that capital, a society had been formed before the revolution, calling themselves Friends of the Blacks (Amis des Noirs), pretending, like those in England, that their views were limited to the discon-

1790.
Dec. 29.
Slave trade.

1789.

Society of
Amis des
Noirs.

* 34 to 19.

† Clarkson, v. ii. c. 2.

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1790.

Mission from
England.

tinuance of the trade, while, in fact, their aim extended to the extinction of the state of slavery. This society languished in a state of general disregard, until revived by the breath of the revolution. Among its members were the Duke de la Rochefoucault, Petion, Brissot, and the Abbé Grégoire; but it received numerous and powerful accessions, and, among others, the governing name of Mirabeau. As soon as the rights of man were decreed, this society caused copies to be printed and distributed in great numbers among the people of colour in the West Indies, to instruct them that they were by birth the equals of their masters*. To this society, Mr. Clarkson, who represented the committee in London, speedily found access; and the manner in which the French practised on him is a curious specimen of their eagerness in catching at every opportunity to make parties, of whatever country, pay homage to the legislature of their own. The *Amis des Noirs* resolved that they would solicit an audience of M. Necker, at which a deputation from their body would attend. That the president of the National Assembly should be requested to fix a day for hearing the cause of the negroes, and that it should be recommended to the committee in London to draw up a petition to the National Assembly of France, praying for the abolition of the slave trade; the petition, signed by as great a number of the friends to the cause in England as could be procured, was to be sent to the committee at Paris, who would take it in a body to the Assembly. To the latter part of this most extraordinary proposal, the English agent returned the natural answer, that such an address from a mere committee to a foreign legislature was contrary to the rules of propriety in which he had been educated: the British Parliament was not used to receive petitions from the subjects of other nations. The reply was, that the National Assembly would glory in contravening the example of other nations in a case of generosity and justice, and that the petition would have an

* Lacrosette, tome viii. p. 329.

influence which the people of England, unacquainted with the sentiments of the French nation, would hardly credit. The committee in London did not adopt this reasoning: they sent no petition: Mr. Clarkson's operations were very limited. M. Necker received him very politely, asked him to confer frequently, promising that, if business occasioned his absence, his wife should be his substitute. Engravings of the section of a slave ship, and tracts translated from the English, were put in circulation; but, for the time, the result was not favourable to the efforts of the abolishers. Their first attempt in the Assembly failed of success; and in Saint Domingo the Rights of Man produced a dreadful scene of insurrection and massacre*.

It appeared that, in the last session of Parliament, twenty-eight days, during which witnesses were examined at the bar, had been employed in hearing eleven individuals only; and, as it was obvious that all the time which could be spared from other business must be exhausted without any effectual prosecution of this inquiry, Mr. Wilberforce proposed that an open committee should sit up stairs for the purpose of hearing evidence, and that its proceedings should not be suspended by any adjournment of the House. After a short debate, in which Mr. Cawthorne complained of the injury which merchants and planters sustained by procrastination, and wished a period to be fixed, beyond which the examination should not be permitted to extend; and Colonel Tarleton, Mr. William Smith, and Mr. Burke, having made a few observations, the motion was agreed to without a division.

Mr. Wilberforce then moved, in a committee of the whole House, that the chairman should be instructed to move for leave to bring in a bill to prevent the further importation of slaves into the British colonies.

On this proposition the debate lasted two days. Mr. Wilberforce and Sir William Young, on the opposite sides of the question, made speeches of great

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Slow progress
of investigation in England.

1791.

Feb. 4.
Open committee appointed.

April 13.
Mr. Wilberforce's motion for a bill.

Debated.

* Clarkson, vol. ii. c. 2.

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length, distinguished for research and ability. In favour of the motion, appeared Mr. James Martin, Mr. Francis, Mr. William Smith, Mr. Courtenay, Mr. Pitt, and Mr. Fox, who all declared their sentiments in detail; and several other members, who delivered themselves more briefly. In opposition to the motion, beside Sir William Young, were Colonel Tarleton, Lord John Russell, Mr. Stanley, the agent for some of the colonies, Colonel Phipps, Major Scott, and Lord Sheffield.

Every topic applicable to the question was exhausted; assertions on the one hand were met by denials on the other, and arguments advanced with confidence were examined with freedom. In this mode, the debate turned on the tyranny and inhumanity used in obtaining slaves, the horrors of the middle passage, their degraded state and cruel treatment; and anecdotes were cited, both from books and from evidence before the House, in support of the motion. On the other side, in addition to argumentative refutation and denial or disbelief of facts, were urged the injustice to those who were engaged in the trade, and still more to the colonies; the injury to commerce in general; the certainty that the advantages which England threw away would be eagerly caught at by other nations; and it was particularly argued that the proposed measure was premature, as traders, colonists, and even the slaves themselves, ought to have time to prepare for so important a change. It was denied, by the advocates for the measure, that emancipation was at all contemplated; they desired only the cessation of the trade. Very little personality was exhibited on either part; and the debate was so conducted, that two members, who came into the House prepossessed against the motion, or unprepared to decide, declared themselves among its supporters. It was, however, negatived by a great majority*.

Lost.

Colony of
Sierra Leone
established.

As a compensation for this failure, the friends of the abolition were gratified by a complete and almost

undisputed success in another object—the establishment, by statute, of the Sierra Leone Company. At the close of the late war, a great number of American slaves, who had been induced to join the British forces, who had been left in Nova Scotia, a climate unfavourable to their constitution and habits, cheerfully accepted a proposal for forming a colony on the coast of Africa: and more than eleven hundred were carried to Sierra Leone. At the same period*, a great number of these unfortunate persons, who had been landed in England, were seen, in a state of deplorable distress, in all parts of the metropolis, and in other great towns, soliciting charity, or, when that resource failed, betaking themselves to crime to pacify the cravings of nature. These were also collected, to the number of four hundred, and, with about sixty white persons, mostly women of the lowest sort, and in ill-health, sent out to Sierra Leone at the charge of the government. This attempt was marked by misfortune. A long detention in the channel, the voyage and other circumstances acting upon constitutions already impaired, greatly thinned the numbers of the intended settlers. Fifty died before the ships left Plymouth, thirty-four during the passage, eighty-six perished on the coast within four months of their arrival, and fifteen deserted†.

Captain Thompson, of the navy, had obtained from King Tom, and it was afterward confirmed by King Naimbanna, a grant of a piece of land, about twenty miles square, where these people were landed, and supplied with provisions, arms, and tools, to begin the formation of a free and independent colony. For their temporary regulation, and as the basis of their social system, a code was drawn up by Mr. Granville Sharp‡. In this essay, it was laid down as a principle, that in new settlements human labour is more essential and valuable than any other article; but, whether from education, habit, or nature, the people for whom

* In 1786.

† Clarkson, vol. ii. p. 342. Report to the Directors of the Sierra Leone Company, 1792, p. 3. These vessels arrived in May 1787.

‡ Short Sketch of temporary Regulations for the intended Settlement near Sierra Leone, by Granville Sharp.

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he attempted to legislate were so little disposed to labour, that their working tools and building materials were left untouched, although the negroes were assured that the land they tilled and the dwellings they erected should be their own property. Thus the projected colony languished, and the hopes of its founders were depressed. In vain did the benevolent Mr. Sharp charter a vessel, in which fifty negroes, with tools, arms, and money, were to proceed to Sierra Leone. Eleven deserted before the ship sailed, the master plundered the property, and, when the residue arrived*, they found the colony almost abandoned; the few white persons who had been left, having migrated to the slave factories†.

Sierra Leone
Company
formed.Bill for a
charter.May 8.
Opposed.

Still the hopes of the parties did not break down under these disappointments. A joint-stock company was formed for carrying their project into execution; and a bill was brought into the House of Commons for allowing them a charter for thirty-one years, and protecting the general property of the share-holders from the common effects of the bankrupt law on the estates of co-partners. On the motion for a second reading, Mr. Gascoyne presented petitions from merchants of London, and from the African company, praying to be heard by counsel. He objected to the bill, as tending to establish a monopoly. Sierra Leone was the only river, for an extent of sixteen hundred miles, which afforded ships a safe and commodious harbour. If the bill gave the intended corporation an exclusive right to the harbour of Sierra Leone, that would be a monopoly. If the water, which was now obtained for ships from a spring within the circumference or tract of land which the Company meant to have inclosed, was to be paid for, he should deem that a monopoly. The nations, too, were in the habit of crossing this very spot, for the purpose of trading with the ships; and it would be a great injustice to restrain their commerce, or oblige them to make a circuitous

* 1788.

† In addition to the authorities above cited, see Macpherson's *Annals*, vol. iv. pp. 127-175; and a *Voyage to Sierra Leone*, by Lieutenant Matthews.

journey. These objections were easily answered by Mr. Thornton, who denied that a monopoly was intended, or could possibly result from the measure, that it was merely designed as a protection for those who embarked a portion of their fortunes in a commerce for the natural productions of Africa, and that it would not occasion any injury to other traders.

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On the third reading, objections were renewed by Mr. Cawthorne, who doubted the right of his Majesty to make any grant of land in Sierra Leone. He raised some merriment by reading the conveyance brought home by Captain Thompson, graced with the mark of King Tom, assigning lands to the Captain and some other persons, and to their heirs for ever. Mr. Sharp had drawn up a code of laws; but the settlers, after plundering the stores and robbing one another, had dispersed. King Tom was dead; and his successor King Jamie, far from acknowledging the validity of the grant, seized some of the new comers, sold them as slaves to British merchants, drove the settlers from the district, and compelled them to seek refuge far up the country. He did not desire to prevent the new Company from exploring and deriving benefit from the interior, but could not assent to their possessing exclusive or peculiar rights, or gaining dominion over a great and important river.

May 30.

These opinions were supported by Lord Sheffield, Mr. Matthew Montagu, and Mr. Hippisley, and answered shortly by Mr. Henry Thornton, Sir William Young, Mr. Buxton, and Mr. Devaynes, who preferred the mark of King Tom or King Jamie, as a title to the more usual one of driving the natives from their lands, and then using such possession as a title. The establishment, it was expected, would lead to the civilization of Africa and the abolition of the slave-trade.

On a division, the opposers of the bill were defeated by a great majority*; and the measure does not seem to have encountered any opposition in the upper House.

Passed.

* 87 to 9.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTIETH.

1790—1791.

Occurrences in France.—General change of ministry—exculpation of the Duke of Orléans and Mirabeau.—Conduct of the Assembly toward foreign nations—the clergy—oath imposed on them.—The King's assent forced—some of the clergy conform, the majority refuse.—The King's aunts go to Rome.—Altered conduct of Mirabeau.—Riot in Paris.—Decree against emigrants.—Attack on the castle of Vincennes—conduct of Lafayette—the King's friends maltreated—perseverance of Mirabeau.—The King ill—regency provided for—residence of the King decreed.—Illness—and death of Mirabeau—honours paid him.—Proceedings with respect to religion—resistance of the King—his journey to St. Cloud prevented—his ineffectual complaint to the Assembly—he yields up his objections to constitutional priests—his letter.—Influence of these events on the English Parliament.—Canada.—King's message.—Mr. Pitt's motion.—Mr. Fox.—Petitions—progress of the bill.—State of the opposition party.—Mr. Hussey's motion.—Speech of Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt.—Further observations of Mr. Fox—situation of him and Mr. Burke.—Motion by Mr. Sheridan to adjourn the debate on the Canada bill.—Mr. M. A. Taylor.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Powys.—Mr. Burke.—Debate on the recommitment of the bill.—Mr. Burke.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. M. A. Taylor.—Mr. St. John—continued efforts to bear down Mr. Burke. Lord Sheffield moves a question of order.—Mr. Fox.—Mr. Burke—he disclaims all future friendship with Mr. Fox.—Agitation and speech of Mr. Fox—Mr. Burke—Mr. Pitt.—Motion of order withdrawn.—Further proceedings on the bill.—Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt

—Mr. Burke—Mr. Fox—Mr. Burke.—Bill passes.—Result of the late altercations.—State of the Roman Catholics.—Mr. Mitford's motion to bring in a bill for their relief seconded by Mr. Windham—objections of Mr. Fox—Mr. Pitt.—The bill in a Committee.—Mr. Fox.—Debates.—The bill passes the lower House—debated in the upper House.—Lord Rawdon.—Speech of Dr. Moore, Archbishop of Canterbury—of Dr. Horsley, Bishop of St. David's—oath amended—bill passed—its effect.—Libel bill.—Corn bill.—Session ended.

THAT some debates and proceedings in Parliament may be rightly understood, it is necessary to recapitulate events which occurred in France.

Necker's removal was followed by a general change, and the character and behaviour of ministers was also essentially altered. Mutiny in the fleet, and disturbances in various parts of the kingdom, served as a foundation for a report from four committees of the Assembly, in which the conduct of administration was severely criticised. M. du Portail succeeded Latour du Pin as minister at war. He promised the Assembly to reduce into practice the sublime theory of their laws. Du Porte du Tertre, an obscure lawyer, was made keeper of the state seal, as the King's seal was now denominated. He required of the commune permission to retain his scarf as a municipal officer, and assumed the proud distinction of plebeian minister. Both these persons owed their appointment to Lafayette; and, after some slight pauses, the other posts were filled with men of similar description.

Soon after the return of the Duke of Orléans from his enforced visit to London, the Assembly, in considering the report of the court at the Chatelet, had pronounced him and Mirabeau blameless in the transactions of the preceding October. This acquittal enabled the Duke to remain undisturbed in the French capital, and to renew and continue his pernicious intrigues; but, although his malignity was rather increased than abated, his political character was greatly

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Occurrences
in France.
General
change of
ministry.

Exculpation of
the Duke of
Orléans and
Mirabeau.

Sep. 30.

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changed, as his pusillanimity and want of the higher qualities requisite to a great conspirator became generally known. His disgraced name and exhausted purse were still of some use to those men, who, while he was aiming at the throne, were planning the utter destruction of kingly authority.

Conduct of
the Assembly

Acting under such disclosed and such latent impulses, the National Assembly, by their decrees and conduct, prepared the way for the hostility of foreign nations and the total destruction of every thing established in their own. Thus they treated with lofty contempt all applications, on behalf of the German Princes, for a recognition of the rights reserved to them by treaties in Lorraine and Alsace—rights which had been destroyed by the decrees of August 1789* ; they formally annexed Corsica to the realm of France, and proceeded in wresting from the Pope his indisputable rights in Avignon and some other provinces, shewing how deceitful was their formal renunciation of views of conquest and aggrandizement. The nobility might be considered as effectually destroyed ; but the clergy and the throne remained, and, degraded as they were, still afforded means of gratifying malignity by reiterated insults.

As to foreign
nations.

The clergy.

After depriving the clergy of their established revenues, laws were made declaring all benefices elective, admitting persons of every sect, even those who were not Christians, to vote in these elections, and totally altering the extent and limits of dioceses. The clergy respectfully submitted that the Assembly could not assume dominion over the discipline and spiritual government of the church, which could only be arranged by a national council : but this proposition excited the indignation of the legislature ; pretended conspiracies and insurrections were denounced and declaimed on with fury. A report from the four committees was produced, inveighing against the supposed crimes of the priesthood, and proposing a decree by which they should be compelled to swear adherence and submission

Nov. 26.

Oath imposed
on them.* *Mémoires d'un Homme d'Etat*, tom. i. p. 78.

to the civil constitution of the clergy, and denouncing civil prosecutions against those who, after refusing the oaths, should retain benefices, or exercise ecclesiastical functions. This decree was ably combated by the energetic and lofty eloquence of Maury, the solid reasonings of the Abbé de Montesquieu, and the pathetic simplicity of the Bishop de Clermont; but as their arguments were answered only by profane ribaldry or wanton insult, the clergy announced their resolution to take no further share in the discussion; and the decree, with another, still more rigorous, proposed by Mirabeau, passed the Assembly.

The King had already received from the Pope a brief, expressing his disapprobation of the civil constitution of the clergy; and Louis consequently withheld his assent. The Assembly pressed him to sanction their decree, and, on his refusal, the violent party threatened to renew the outrages of October. The bishops were execrated for appealing to the Pope; the weakness of Frenchmen, who could submit to the veto of a transalpine pontiff, was derided; and, at last, the King reluctantly wrote to the Assembly, announcing his acquiescence. The demagogues now triumphed, and, on the ensuing day, were highly gratified, when sixty priests and monks, headed by the Abbé Grégoire, conformed to the decree.

A day was fixed on which every ecclesiastical member of the Assembly must peremptorily take the oath, or resign his benefices.

On that day the hall was surrounded and the tribunes filled by a ferocious mob. The clergy, appearing in their places, were separately called by name. The Bishop of Agen, being the first, in modest and moderate terms declined taking the oath. The yells and cries à la lanterne, which accompanied and followed his speech, did not deter other members of the church from giving similar answers; for fear of the effect to be produced by these manly protests, the Assembly directed the president to desist from calling the names, and required a general consent to take the oaths, or renunciation of their benefices. One curé alone com-

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1790.

The King's
assent forced.

December 23.

December 26.

Some of the
clergy con-
form.

1791.
January 4.

The rest
refuse.

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1791.

plied, named Laudrin; and the rest were ejected from their livings.

All the bishops, except three*, and many thousands of parish priests and curés, were thus to be suddenly replaced. A new decree shortened the term required by law for enabling clergymen to hold benefices, and the vacancies were filled by men unqualified by education, habits, or principles, for the sacred functions. An ordination could not take place but at the hands of three bishops; and, as only three remained, some difficulties were apprehended on that point; but Talleyrand removed all obstacles. His two colleagues expressed great hesitation, but he urged the fear of violence from the mob, talked significantly of self-destruction, and displayed, at the same time, a pocket pistol,—arguments which proved infallible, and surmounted all obligations of oaths, of character, and of duty to the head of the church†. The recusant clergy, by their heroic conduct, greatly elevated their character‡.

Disgusted at such injuries and insults to the ecclesiastical body, the King's aunts, Mesdames Adelaide and Victoire, who had lived uncorrupted in the court of their father, Louis the Fifteenth, and had since been distinguished only by their virtue, benevolence, and piety, resolved to depart for Rome. The King regretted their determination, but would not interpose his authority. The clubs and the populace made it a pretext for requiring a law to settle the particular mode of existence of the reigning family, and all its branches; and Monsieur, the King's brother, was obliged personally to assure an immense mob, assembled at his residence, the Luxembourg, that he entertained no intention to quit the kingdom. Ano-

The King's
aunts go to
Rome.

* The three exceptions were, De Lomenie, Bishop of Sens; De Jarente, Bishop of Orléans; and Talleyrand Perigord, Bishop of Autun. To these the Bishop of Viviers might be added, but he was insane.

† Dumont. *Souvenirs sur Mirabeau*, p. 258.

‡ For these particulars, see the debates on the days alluded to, the histories of the revolution, Bertrand's *Annals*, vol. iii. pages 197, 262, 277, and the Abbé Barruel's *History of the Clergy*. The principal professors and masters of the University of Paris did not emulate this heroic example, but, to retain their emoluments, took the oaths.

ther party prepared to compel the Princesses to give up their intention ; but fortunately they escaped from Paris in the night. They were arrested at Arnay le Duc ; but a decree of the Assembly, procured after long and tumultuous altercations, gave them liberty.

In this debate, Mirabeau shewed his admirable skill in availing himself of the degraded manners of those whom he had to address. Instead of resorting to useless arguments of reason and justice, he carried his point by asking contemptuously, of what consequence it could be to the nation, whether two old women counted their beads in Paris or Rome ? For some time past, the conduct of this demagogue had been a problem which none of his old adherents, and few of the King's friends, were able to solve. His speeches, at some times, appeared to favour the court, and at others he proposed measures, attended with explanations, which, although in the genuine sense of the revolutionists, seemed, even to them, to afford too extensive and candid disclosures. In fact, a negotiation between him and the Court had been successfully renewed ; and, in consideration of six hundred thousand livres (£26,250) in present payment, and a monthly stipend of fifty thousand livres (£2,187), he had engaged with earnest zeal in the cause of monarchy, and gained the entire confidence of the King and his most intimate advisers. But, as Mirabeau was sensible that, in the degraded and enfeebled state to which he had reduced the royal authority, no effort of force would be attended with the desired consequences, he still proposed to forward his new measures by means of his popularity ; to awe the most frantic of the revolutionists, by threatening to disclose their crimes ; to combine others in his cause by a judicious mixture of force promises and arguments : to secure the fidelity of the army to the sovereign, and engage the people to petition for the dissolution of the present and the convocation of a new Assembly, on the well-founded allegation that the existing legislature had exceeded the authorities with which it was originally invested, and, consequently, that its abolitions, resumptions, and regula-

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1791.
Feb. 19th.

24th.

Altered conduct of
Mirabeau.

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1791.

Riot in Paris

Feb. 24th.

25th.
Residence of
public func-
tionaries
decreed.28th.
Law against
tumults.

tions were not valid. It was also a part of this project that the King should quit Paris, where he was, in fact, a captive, and, putting himself at the head of his troops, commanded by the Marquis de Bouillé, fix his abode at Montmedi, proclaiming himself the protector of his people, and defender of their rights and liberties. The plan embraced no violence against the Assembly.

The permission afforded to the King's aunts to travel to Rome, formed the pretext for a popular commotion; a large mob, headed by Theroigne de Mericourt, rushed toward the palace. Bailly, pale and trembling, professed an inclination, but wanted spirit, to act against the insurgents; they were not dispersed till a detachment of the national guards arrived with their cannon. A party of gentlemen, slightly armed, attended on this occasion, to protect the persons of the King and Queen. They had often acted in the same manner before, and their conduct had received public approbation; but they were now selected as objects of popular fury, and distinguished by the name of Chevaliers du poignard.

Barnave took advantage of the heated state of the public mind to introduce a motion on the residence of public functionaries; the King being designated as the first of them. On the motion of Mirabeau, this question was adjourned until the committees should present an entire code of laws respecting the royal family. All means were now resorted to for inflaming the people. Rumours were spread of an approaching invasion by the emigrants; clamours were vented against the Chevaliers du poignard; and the Chateau de Vincennes, situate a few miles from Paris, was indicated as a new Bastille, undergoing repair as a prison for the enemies of the Court.

A debate founded on these circumstances being announced, the galleries were, at an early hour, filled with a screaming mob. Chapelier, who had hitherto been a strenuous agent in the cause of sedition, and a founder of the Jacobin club, proposed a law against tumults, which passed with little opposition, because the parties knew very well that a decree of the legisla-

ture would avail little against the unruly will of the all-powerful clubs.

Chapelier, as reporter from the committee on the constitution, then proposed a decree against emigration. This measure was opposed by Mirabeau, as inconsistent with freedom, and fitted only to those states where the sovereign wished to convert his dominions into a prison. In support of these opinions, he read a passage from a letter which, eight years before, he had addressed to Frederick William, King of Prussia. The decree proposed to establish a council of three members of the Assembly, invested with a dictatorial power, and authorized, in times of commotion, to point out absentees, who should be obliged to return on pain of being treated as rebels; this triumvirate was alone to be invested with the power of issuing authorities to quit the country; and those who refused obedience were to forego all the rights of French citizens; to be declared incapable of holding any office, and their whole property forfeited. Mirabeau exclaimed vehemently against this decree, declaring that, if it passed, he would never obey it. He moved the order of the day, with a declaration that the proposed law was incompatible with the principles of the constitution. Rewbell and Merlin, aided by Vernier, evaded the decision of this question, by moving an adjournment, and thus was a basis laid for the subsequent decrees which reduced so many families to poverty and despair.

While these discussions agitated the Assembly, a detachment of the lower order of Parisians proceeded to demolish the castle of Vincennes*, although the legislature had authorised, and the municipality of Paris had commenced the repairs. They departed about ten o'clock, and although their intention had been previously announced, Lafayette did not begin to collect the national guards, for the purpose of opposing them, till noon. The battalion of the faubourg St.

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Decree against
emigrants.

Opposed by
Mirabeau.

Attack on the
castle of
Vincennes.

Conduct of
Lafayette.

* It may be worth while to call to the recollection of the reader that this was the state prison in which Mirabeau was confined from May 1777, to December 1780.

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Antoine were reluctant to act, and loud in complaints, in which they were encouraged by their colonel, Santerre, a brewer, who was patronized and employed by the Duke of Orléans to destroy the popularity of Lafayette. On his arrival at Vincennes, the General easily expelled a mob of four thousand from the court-yard; but when he was proceeding to drive them from the apartments, he was surprised to hear from his own troops a cry of down with Lafayette! By an exertion of firmness he brought them to their duty, and arrested sixty-four of the mutineers, whom he carried prisoners to the capital.

The King's
friends
maltreated.

The tumult and agitation which prevailed, during this whole day, gave considerable alarm to the faithful friends of the King; about three hundred, armed as usual, collected in one of the apartments; but on an application to the King, he reluctantly ordered them to deposit their arms in a place of safety. Lafayette now arrived, vociferating the song of sedition, "ça-ira! tous les aristocrats à la lanterne!" and, after grossly insulting the officers of the household, expressing great indignation at the supposition that a constitutional King could want additional protection when surrounded by his national guards, and swearing such an event should never again occur, he snatched the arms of the royalists from their deposit, and gave them to his troops, who immediately thrust the unfortunate proprietors down stairs, beating and wounding them, and conveyed six to prison, where they were confined twelve days. Not content with these base indignities, Lafayette extorted from the King an order, that, in future, only the national guards on duty, and the persons belonging to his household and that of the royal family, should be admitted.

Perseverance
of Mirabeau.

Although the general events of this day were unfavourable to Mirabeau's intended appeal to the people, he bent the whole energy of his genius to the formation of new connexions, and the establishment of a firm and powerful party. The exertions of such a man could never be ineffectual, and he found his importance daily augmenting, although his personal opponents in

the clubs obtained over him occasional and impermanent advantages, and the agents of sedition sold a pamphlet in the streets, which they recommended by announcing it to contain “ the great treachery of Count “ Mirabeau.”

At this period the King was attacked with a fever, attended with aggravating symptoms ; the people expressed great solicitude, and celebrated his recovery by illuminations, and a Te Deum at the cathedral. Debates were commenced on the establishment of a Regency in case of his decease, during the minority of his successor ; and it was decided, that the next male heir of full age, being a native and resident in France, might claim it of right ; and in default of such relative, the regency was to be elective. The guardianship of the minor’s person was confided to his mother, provided she remained unmarried ; but if she took a second husband, a guardian was to be elected by the legislature.

As a foundation for a decree respecting the residence of public functionaries, the committee presented a report, in which the King was called the first public functionary ; and it was ordered that all should dwell in whatever place might be the proper scene of their employments ; the King to be always resident, during the session, within twenty leagues of the legislative body ; and his quitting the kingdom without their permission, was to be considered an abdication. A law was also enacted establishing a provisional tribunal at Orléans, to try crimes against the state, instead of the Chatelet, until the formation of a high national court.

In the recent debates, Mirabeau had taken but little share. While occupied in his more important arrangements, he was seized with spasms in the chest ; and had recourse, as on former occasions, to the warm bath, which produced a temporary effect ; but contemning his disease, and relying on the strength of his constitution, he attended too little to his health, and probably, by his exertions, accelerated his death. When greatly exhausted, a short retreat into the

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The King ill.
March 4th.

17th.

Regency provided for.

22nd.

Residence of
the King
decreed.
21st.

Illness ;

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2nd April.
and death of
Mirabeau.
30th.
March.Honours
paid him.Proceedings
with respect
to religion.

country afforded him hopes of recovery ; on his return to Paris, however, he found himself much worse ; and, after enduring for two days excruciating tortures, expired, lamenting, with his latest breath, the French monarchy, which with him would descend, he said, into the grave.

When his illness was announced, the whole capital was in alarm ; his door was crowded with enquirers, and messengers from the King augmented the number. His death was ascribed, by the surgeons who opened him, to the stoppage of an issue ; his heart, they said, was dried up, and his intestines mortified. Suspicions were entertained that his days were abridged by poison ; which neither the above report, nor all the reasonings on the subject, have been able entirely to remove : probability points strongly toward that conjecture, but positive proof is wanting*. His death was regarded as a public calamity ; the theatres were shut, the fleets lowered their top-sails, the Assembly, the municipality, and the directory of the department, went into mourning, and all France followed the example. He was buried in the church of Sainte Geneviève, which was, on his death, decreed to be a receptacle for the ashes of illustrious men ; and, as Christianity declined in France, received the heathen name of Pantheon.

The election of priests who would take the oaths, and the appointment of bishops, engaged much attention. Talleyrand, although he conformed to the oaths, renounced his see, but assisted in the consecration of others, particularly of Gobet, who was elected Archbishop of Paris ; and for this and other parts of his conduct, the recreant ecclesiastic was excommunicated by the Pope. The Assembly, in revenge, decreed that all bulls and other edicts of his holiness should be deemed void, unless sanctioned by the legislature, and that divine service should not, in any of its parts, be performed by any priests who had not taken

* This subject is amply and fairly discussed in *Mémoires Biographiques, littéraires et politiques, de Mirabeau, écrits par lui-même, par son père, son oncle, et son fils adoptif*, tom. xi. p. 139, p. 172, et seqq.

the oaths. The populace assisted the Assembly, by persecuting all who attended divine worship in hospitals or chapels, where the hated priesthood were employed, beating the men and indecently scourging the women who dared to be religious. That the Pantheon might not be unpeopled with the deities of philosophical adoration, it was decreed that the remains of Voltaire and Rousseau should be transferred to that repository, and the ceremony was pompously performed.

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To the sufferings of the clergy, the King could not be indifferent, although he had been forced to sanction the decree respecting them. The attainment of liberty or power on the plan suggested by Mirabeau, was not now to be contemplated : another project was recommended ; but its speedy execution was not to be hoped. The exertions of the demagogues, and of Lafayette in particular, were daily directed to the object of compelling the King to attend divine service, and receive the holy sacrament from a constitutional priest at Easter ; but the King, by advice of the Bishop of Clermont, resolved to postpone the pascal communion ; and, that he might avoid importunities and insults, to pass that week at St. Cloud.

Resistance of
the King.

Lafayette, apprehensive that this excursion would be opposed by the populace, took the precaution of increasing the national guards, and endeavoured to protect the King in this exercise of his natural and even constitutional right ; but the clubs, particularly that of the Cordeliers*, had made arrangements for detaining him by force. As soon as the royal family had taken their seats in their carriages, they were surrounded by an innumerable mob, who clamorously insisted that the coaches should not be permitted to pass, mingling with their vociferations the grossest abuse and obscenity ; and even insulting the Queen by actions of horrible immodesty. Lafayette attempted to clear the way, but his troops refused to act against the

18th April.
His journey to
St. Cloud
prevented.

* A society formed from the most profane, base, and unprincipled of the Jacobins. Like them, they took their name from the place of their sitting : a suppressed convent of Franciscan friars.

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19th.
The King's
ineffectual
complaint to
the Assembly.

people; and he was furiously insulted by Danton, who encouraged and in some degree directed the rabble. Lafayette offered to put himself at the head of a few officers, and clear the way, at the hazard of his life; but the King would not permit the dangerous and unprofitable attempt; and, after enduring every species of licentious insult, during an hour and a half, the royal family returned to their prison, for so, notwithstanding the rhetoric of popular orators, and all the studied misrepresentations of the municipality and the Assembly, the palace must be considered.

The King, in person, carried his complaints to the Assembly, and declared his unaltered resolution to visit St. Cloud; but the legislature, although they applauded those parts of his speech which promised to maintain the civil constitution of the clergy, adopted no resolution for facilitating his journey, and it was renounced in silence. Lafayette, indignant at the conduct of his troops, resigned the command; but, after two days, resumed it, on the earnest solicitations of Bailly, and a deputation of the Commune. He dismissed fourteen of the most refractory soldiers, and attempted to impose on the whole corps a new oath; but the men he had discharged were hailed as martyrs of liberty, and the oath was declared superfluous and illegal.

The King
yields his
objections to
constitutional
priests.

Elated by their triumph, the popular faction renewed their violence against the nonjuring priests; and the King, feeling heartily for their situation, accepted, in an evil hour, the tender of counsel and assistance from the Lameths. To save the unfortunate ecclesiastics from danger and persecution, he dismissed them from about his person; and even did violence to his conscience, by hearing mass performed on Easter-day, at the church of St. Germain l'Auxerre, by a constitutional priest.

His letter.

23rd April.

In compliance with the advice of the Lameths, and, in contradiction to that of his older and better friends, he adopted the fatal and dishonourable measure of writing to all his ministers at foreign courts a letter of instructions, enabling them to declare his entire ap-

probation of the revolution, his desire to maintain the constitution, and an avowal that he considered himself perfectly free and happy. In vain did Montmorin oppose the transmission of this disgraceful scroll; it was resolved on and executed too suddenly for his arguments to prevail: the Assembly heard it read with expressions of rapture, and sent a deputation to congratulate the King; but the royalists took no share in these transports; and Louis himself had the mortification, the next day, to find Montmorin's prophecy verified, the enthusiasm of the moment entirely exhausted, and a party gaining credit by declaring that the professions were too extensive to be sincere.

These events were often referred to, and had a material influence on some proceedings in Parliament, which are now to be detailed.

In opening the session, the King had pointed the attention of both Houses to the situation of the province of Quebec, and recommended the establishment of necessary regulations. Since the year 1774, Canada had been governed under the provisions of the act which was so much debated*, and had increased so largely in wealth and population, that a new system was obviously required.

Influence of these events on the English Parliament. Canada.

In the last session†, Mr. Fox had mentioned a vote of the preceding year, and reproached ministers for their tardiness and violation of a pledge. Mr. Secretary Grenville lamented and accounted for the delay, but denied that any pledge had been given. Similar conversations were repeated; but no measures could, for the time, be introduced.

At length the King announced, by a message, his intention, when enabled by Parliament to establish necessary regulations, to divide the province, and to make a permanent and proportionate appropriation of lands for the support of a Protestant clergy.

Feb. 25th. King's message.

Mr. Pitt moved to bring in a bill for repealing a portion of the existing statute, and making further provision for the government of Quebec. As he did

March 4th. Mr. Pitt's motions.

* See chap. xxii.

† March 8th, 1790.

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not foresee any opposition, he would, for the present, only state the outline of the intended measure. It would tend to terminate the differences and growing competition between the ancient inhabitants and the new settlers from England and America, and bring the government as near as possible to the British constitution. The province was to be divided into two parts, under the denominations of Upper and Lower Canada (the Upper for the English and American settlers, the lower for the Canadians), and to give a local legislature to both. Beside the elective assembly, each province would have a council, the members of which were to be appointed for life, with hereditary succession to the descendants of such as should be honoured with hereditary titles; which titles were to convey to inhabitants of either province the dignity of a member of council. Landed property was to be held according to the law of England, in soccage tenure; the habeas corpus to be established in both provinces; but the general administration of the law to continue as it had been, until altered by the provincial assemblies. A proper allotment of lands would be made for the Protestant clergy; but, as in one of the provinces the majority of inhabitants would be Roman Catholics, the council and assembly might make allotments for their support, which, if sanctioned by the Crown, should be valid, without the intervention of Parliament. No taxes were to be imposed on the colonists by the British government, except such as were necessary for the regulation of commerce; and, to prevent the possibility of mistake, even those were to be levied and disposed of under the authority of the provincial legislature.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox highly approved of giving to a country so far distant a local legislature; such a provision would exceedingly prepossess him in favour of every part of the plan: the only means of retaining distant colonies with advantage, was, to enable them to govern themselves.

March 21st.
Petitions.

Petitions were presented by Mr. Limburner, the agent, and from some merchants trading to Canada,

who were heard by counsel ; but, unopposed at its first and second reading, unopposed in the committee, the bill was reported to the House. On the motion of Mr. Pitt, the consideration of the report was postponed ; and this measure, hitherto so quietly received, and so little noticed, became the subject of animated debates, and the medium through which differences were declared, friendships dissolved, and new connexions formed, which had a powerful influence on the politics of England, and, perhaps, the affairs of Europe.

After the public difference which had already taken place between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, and the avowed hostility of Mr. Sheridan, after the meeting at Portland House, and after the publications of Mr. Burke on the French Revolution*, and the discussions they had occasioned, it became obvious that the cement which kept together the fabric of opposition was partially lost, and that some portion must sever from the residue. Perhaps some internal sentiments, or the force of habit at least, would have inclined Mr. Fox to avoid a public rupture with his old friend and political guide ; but he was connected with men who would not permit neutrality or compromise ; and, as this disjunction must take place, strong endeavours were used to gain an advantage before the public. In fact, the hopes and views of the different members of opposition now exhibited a strange variety, portending irreconcilable discord. The Duke of Portland, their ostensible head, disliked and dreaded the French revolution as cordially as Mr. Burke. Mr. Windham, whose manly character and fine taste would never permit him to unite in vulgar triumphs, or rejoice in the ascendancy of mobs, entertained opinions equally strong ; yet his personal esteem for Mr. Fox, on the one hand, and his love and veneration for Mr. Burke, on the other, prevented him from a voluntary or affected disclosure of his opinions. Many eminent and honourable persons shared in these feelings : but there

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Progress of the
bill.

State of the
opposition
party.

* Since his "Reflections," Mr. Burke had published, Feb. 1791, "A Letter to a Member of the National Assembly," repeating, reinforcing, and amplifying his former sentiments.

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was a great number of the party in the other extreme. Soured by long opposition, inflamed by supposed wrongs, and caught, perhaps, by theories advanced by French politicians, some were desirous that the example should, to some extent at least, be followed in this country; societies were formed to imitate those which governed France, and, under their direction, a portion of the press was employed to conciliate the public to their views. Of the great opposition leader himself, it is said, that he approved of the French revolution in principle, but abhorred the details. The distinction is too refined for practical application; the details were mere expositions of the effect of the principles; and the actors, in all the horrors of the times, vindicated all that passed, and planned all that was to come, under pretence of supporting principles. But, whatever might be his internal sentiments, Mr. Fox's associates would not allow him to maintain, if he were so inclined, any reserve; declarations, explicit, strong, and irrevocable, were demanded, and he complied to the full extent of the requisition.

April 8th.
Mr. Hussey's
motion.

On the motion for taking the Quebec Bill into further consideration, Mr. Hussey, having presented a new petition from merchants and others, required a recommitment.

Speech of
Mr. Fox.

He was seconded by Mr. Fox, who considered the bill as of great importance, not alone to the people for whose government it was intended, but to Great Britain. He hoped that, in promulgating the scheme of a new constitution for the province, the House would keep in view those enlightened principles of freedom which had already made a rapid progress, and were daily becoming more universal as the love of liberty was gaining ground, in consequence of the diffusion of literature and knowledge; a constitution should be formed for Canada as consistent as possible with the principles of freedom. In the projected assemblies, the number of members was too small: in popular bodies of legislature, the people should be fully and freely represented; and the assemblies should have all their incidental virtues and vices; but such an end

could not be effected by a collection of only sixteen or thirty persons. Our septennial act had been defended by referring to the circumstances attending a general election ; but why, in Canada, where, for many years at least, no such consequences were to be apprehended, should not elections be annual or triennial ? Why should qualifications of electors, instead of a freehold, forty shillings annual value, as in England, be raised to five pounds ? The numbers of the councils were small, but might be indefinitely extended ; the members were neither hereditary, nor chosen by electors, as in some colonies in the West Indies, nor appointed by the King, but rather a compound of all. On the subject of hereditary powers, or honours, no general proposition could easily be maintained ; but he saw nothing so good in them as to warrant their introduction into a country where they were unknown, and by such means distinguishing Canada from all our other colonies. In countries where they made a part of the constitution, he did not think it wise to destroy them ; but to give birth and life to such principles, in countries where they did not exist, appeared exceedingly unwise. He could only account for it by imagining that Canada, having been formerly a French colony, an opportunity might be sought of reviving those titles of honour, the extinction of which some gentlemen so much deplored ; and to resuscitating, in the west, that spirit of chivalry which had fallen into disgrace in a neighbouring country. Were those red and blue ribbons, which had lost their lustre in the old world, to shine forth again in the new ? It was peculiarly absurd to introduce hereditary honours into America, where those artificial distinctions stunk in the nostrils of the natives.

With equal severity, he censured the intended provision for the clergy. Protestants, as distinguished from Catholics, were not necessarily members of the church of England ; and so a seventh part of the lands hereafter to be granted might be applied to the support of those who were termed Protestant Dissenters. If they were all of the church of England, this would

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not reconcile him to the measure. He disapproved of the clauses relating to appeals, and generally, in comparison with the British dominions in the West Indies, censured every part of the bill. Canada was situated near the colonies of North America; all their animosity on the quarrel between them and Great Britain had subsided; the governments which they had established were better adapted to the situation of the people than any, either of the ancient or modern world: and it was material that the inhabitants of our provinces should have nothing to envy among their neighbours, or in any part of the King's dominions.

Mr. Pitt.

As Mr. Burke was not present at this debate, the reflections cast on his principles, his opinions, and his writings, remained unanswered. Mr. Pitt did not oppose the motion for recommitting the bill; but, while he vindicated its several parts, observed that, as it was not the business of the House to discuss what was the best constitution of government for France, America, or any foreign country, he had always declined making any remarks on the subject. Whether France or America had chosen well or not, he had no difficulty in declaring that the English constitution was in its principle the best for us; better than any of those which were founded on republican principles. Without meaning to use the word republican in an obnoxious sense, he affirmed that none of those republican principles which had been described as the consequence of an extension of learning and light, and which were said to shine in the constitutions of France and America, could improve that of Britain or her colonies.

April 15th.
Further
observations of
Mr. Fox.

In another discussion on a different question*, Mr. Fox took an opportunity of assailing the political opinions of Mr. Burke, at a time when nothing which had passed called for the display of his opinions. He treated on the balance of power, saying he had been a strenuous advocate for it while France was an intriguing, restless nation; but now her situation was

* On the Russian armament.

altered; she had erected a government from which neither insult nor injustice was to be dreaded; and he had become extremely indifferent on that point, and so should continue until some other nation should combine the power with the principles of government which had formerly prevailed in France. Those who detested the principles of the revolution had reason to rejoice in its effects. The new government aimed to make its subjects happy. As to their change of system, he knew that different opinions were entertained; but he admired the new constitution, considering it altogether as the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country.

This speech was delivered at a late hour, when Mr. Pitt, Mr. Windham, and many other members, had spoken. Mr. Burke immediately rose, with great appearance of emotion; but cries of question, raised by the adherents of Mr. Fox, prevented him from being heard*.

No doubt could now be entertained that a final rupture must ensue between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; but Mr. Fox seems rather to have deprecated than desired a public conflict. Mr. Burke was determined to explain his own principles; and he must have shewn a most dastardly spirit if he had not. No accusation could justly be advanced against him of having sought to embroil the debates with his favourite topics; he had spoken on the subject of the Russian armament without even an allusion to France; but the Quebec bill was the only subject before Parliament which would afford him an opportunity of vindicating himself. In preparation for the day, and smarting still under the recent insult, he applied to some friends of the ministry, and requested their protection against any attempt to drown his voice by mere clamour. On the day when the next discussion of the Quebec bill was to take place, Mr. Fox visited Mr. Burke for the

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Situation of
Mr. Fox and
Mr. Burke.

Their meeting.

* He afterward published that which would have been the substance of his speech, under the title of *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*.

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first time after a considerable interval, and, in the presence of a mutual friend, heard from him the outline of the remarks intended to be offered, and an explanation, contradicting a statement which had been circulated, tending to impart a belief that the King had expressed opinions favourable to Mr. Fox; but that Mr. Pitt, anxious to impress on the mind of his Sovereign that Mr. Fox's principles were altogether republican, had instigated Mr. Burke in the discussion. When this point had been satisfactorily adjusted, Mr. Fox expressed a desire that the debate should not take place on the recommitment of the Quebec bill; a request not altogether fair or reasonable, as the old statesman had been attacked in his absence, and, when the opportunity to answer occurred, had been silenced, not by the arguments of his opponent, but by the clamour of his friends. Mr. Burke refused compliance, but they did not separate with appearances of hostility; they walked to Westminster together, and together entered the House, making thus the last shew of friendship which they were to exhibit*.

Motion to
adjourn the
debate.

Mr. M. A.
Taylor.

Mr. Fox.

Still the expression of Mr. Burke's opinions was delayed. When Mr. Fox and he arrived, they found that Mr. Sheridan had already proposed the postponement of the question, as the papers were not printed; and as it was the very day preceding the Easter recess, many members were absent. Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor, having complained of the manner in which the constitutions of other countries had been discussed, and declared that, if such a course were continued, he should call members to order, Mr. Fox admitted that, in the course of the session, he had taken opportunities of alluding, perhaps too often, to the French revolution, and expressing opinions in its favour; but, on this bill he had only introduced one levity, silly enough perhaps, and not worth recollection,—an allusion to the extinction of nobility in France, and its revival in

* In this narrative I have followed the Annual Register, vol. xxxiii. An. 1791, published by Rivington, relying on it the more implicitly because I know that the history for that and the following year was written under the correction of two eminent statesmen of the highest honour and integrity, and well apprized of all the facts.

Canada. He never had stated any republican principles, with regard to this country, in or out of Parliament; and when the bill came again to be discussed, although he should be extremely sorry to differ from friends whom he greatly respected, he still adhered to his opinions, and should never be backward in delivering them.

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Mr. Powys complained of the irregular course of debates, and intimated that it would have been better if Mr. Fox had followed the example of Mr. Burke, by writing his opinions, instead of speaking them in Parliament.

Mr. Burke said he did not wish to call forth public opinions unnecessarily, and expressed great anxiety to avoid meeting his friend as his adversary and antagonist. Of his eloquence and abilities he made the highest acknowledgments; but, dear as was his friend, desirous as he was to avoid any difference, there was another object still more dear and more to be desired,—the discharge of his duty, the love of his country.

On the day appointed for the recommitment, as soon as the chairman had taken his seat, a motion was made that the bill should be read paragraph by paragraph. Mr. Burke rose, and a most extraordinary scene ensued. The House, he said, was going to do the great and important act of appointing a legislature for a distant people, and to affirm a legal authority in itself to exercise this high power. The first question would be their competency to act. A body of rights, commonly called the Rights of Man, imported from a neighbouring country, had lately been set up by some persons in this, as paramount to all other rights. A principal article in this new code was, "That all men are by nature free, are equal in respect of rights, and continue so in society." If such a doctrine were to be admitted, then the power of the House could extend no further than to call together all the inhabitants of Canada, and recommend to them the free choice of a constitution for themselves. But the right of this

May 6th.
Debate on the
recommitment
of the bill.

Mr. Burke.

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country to legislate was founded on another code, on which mankind, in all ages, had acted—the law of nations. If the right was established, how was this country to legislate? He could not refer to the experience of old governments, for that was exploded by the academies of Paris and the clubs of London, who saw too much by the light of their new lantern to have recourse to any other. Three systems presented themselves: those of America, of France, and of Great Britain. Great respect was due to that of the United States; they were near neighbours, and our colonists ought not to have reason to envy them; but part of Canada was inhabited chiefly by persons who had migrated from the United States. These men had fled from the blessings of American government, and were not likely to return, shocked by the introduction of the British constitution; and the British inhabitants were, probably, not so much corrupted by the clubs of London and the academies of Paris, as to think that any form of government must be preferable to an old one. To the ancient Canadians, the most numerous body, and entitled to the greatest attention, were we to give the French constitution?—a constitution founded on principles diametrically opposite to ours, that could not assimilate with it in a single point; as different from it as wisdom from folly, as vice from virtue, as the most opposite extremes in nature—a constitution founded on what was called the rights of man? But let this constitution be examined by its practical effects in the French West-indian colonies. These, notwithstanding three disastrous wars, were most happy and flourishing, until they heard of the Rights of Man. As soon as this system arrived among them, Pandora's box, replete with every mortal evil, seemed to fly open, hell itself to yawn, and every demon of mischief to overspread the face of the earth. Blacks rose against whites, and each against another in murderous hostility; subordination was destroyed, the bonds of society torn asunder, and every man seemed to thirst for the blood of his neighbour.

" Black spirits and white,
 " Blue spirits and grey,
 " Mingle, mingle, mingle."

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All was toil and trouble, discord and blood, from the moment this doctrine was promulgated among them; and he verily believed that, wherever the Rights of Man were preached, such ever had been, and ever would be, the consequence. Troops were sent out; but, strongly imbued with the system of the Rights of Man, they had made themselves parties in the rebellion. Ought this example to induce us to send to our colonies a cargo of the Rights of Man? As soon would he send them a bale of infected cotton from Marseilles. Let us consider, he proceeded, the effects of the French constitution on France; a constitution on which he looked not with approbation, but with horror, as involving every principle to be detested, and pregnant with every consequence to be dreaded and abominated, and the use which they proposed to make of it. Notwithstanding their boastful pretensions, they had, after sitting nearly two years, done nothing; but contented themselves with enjoying the democratic satisfaction of heaping every disgrace on fallen royalty. They had a King, such as they wished, a King who was no King; over whom the Marquis de Lafayette, chief gaoler of Paris, mounted guard. The royal prisoner, having wished to taste the freshness of the country air, had obtained a day rule to take a journey about five miles from Paris. But scarcely had he left the city, before his suspicious governors, recollecting that a temporary release from confinement might afford him the means of escape, sent a tumultuous rabble after him, who, surrounding his carriage, commanded him to stop, while one of his grenadiers, belonging to his faithful and brave body guard, presented a bayonet to the breast of the fore horse.

At this point, the process of interruption was commenced by Mr. Baker, who called Mr. Burke to order; his argument had a tendency to involve the House in unnecessary altercation, and perhaps the government itself in a contest with another nation.

He is interrupted by
 Mr. Baker.

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Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox thought his right honourable friend could hardly be said to be out of order. It seemed that this was a day of privilege, when any gentleman might stand up, select his mark, and abuse any government he pleased, whether it had reference or not to the point in question. Although nobody had said a word on the subject of the French revolution, his right honourable friend had risen and abused that event. He might have treated the Gentoo government, or that of China, or of Turkey, or the laws of Confucius, precisely in the same manner, and with equal appositiveness to the question. Every gentleman had a right that day to abuse the government of every country, or any country, ancient or modern, as much and as grossly as he thought proper.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Burke answered this taunt with manly indignation. He understood his right honourable friend's irony; but his conclusions were very erroneously drawn from his premises. The National Assembly was never imitated so well as in the present debate. There M. Cazales could never utter a single sentence without a roar.

Mr. M. A.
Taylor.

Mr. Michael Angelo Taylor now spoke to order; the debate was on the Quebec bill, and not on the English or the French constitution.

Mr. St. John.

While Mr. Burke was defending himself against this opponent, Mr. St. John interrupted him; and, in like manner, in the course of the debate, beside frequent clamours of "order" and "chair," Mr. Burke's efforts to make himself understood were impeded eight times, by speeches from different members of opposition. He complained of this conduct, considering himself unfairly treated by those with whom he had been accustomed to act, but from whom he now received extreme violence. He should, if the tumult of order abated, proceed in the account he was going to give of the horrible consequences flowing from the French idea of the rights of man. At this point, Lord Sheffield stopped him, by moving as a distinct question, that dissertations on transactions in France are not regular or orderly on the question before the House.

Continued
efforts to bear
down Mr.
Burke.

On this motion, Mr. Pitt observed, that although he abstained from allusions to the constitution of France, yet, when they were laying down a government for Americans, Frenchmen, and Englishmen, who composed the province of Canada, how could it be out of order to consider the American, the French, and the English constitutions?

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Mr. Fox, in a long speech, supported Lord Sheffield's motion. It had been rendered necessary by the irregular conduct of his right honourable friend, in unfairly bringing on the discussion of a matter by no means connected with the bill before the House. Instead of debating the bill, clause by clause, or giving notice of a particular day for any specific purpose, he had chosen a course which seemed to confirm the insinuation urged against himself, of having maintained republican principles as applicable to the British constitution. These he disclaimed. On the French revolution, indeed, the opinions of himself and Mr. Burke were wide as the poles asunder. He thought that revolution, on the whole, one of the most glorious events in the history of man; but the constitution remained to be improved by experience, and accommodated to circumstances. Were he to differ with his right honourable friend on points of Greek or Roman history, would that House be the proper place for the discussion? Were he to praise the conduct of the elder Brutus, and to say that the expulsion of the Tarquins was a noble and patriotic act, would it thence be fair to argue that he meditated the establishment of a consular government in this country? Were he to repeat the eloquent eulogium of Cicero on the taking off of Cæsar, would it thence be deducible that he went with a knife about him for the purpose of killing some great man or orator? If this country were in the precise situation that France had been at the time of her revolution, then, with all the obloquy that might be heaped on the declaration, he should say, that revolution was an object of imitation for us. When the proper period for discussion came, feeble as his powers were, compared with those of his right honourable

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friend, whom he must call his master, for he had taught him every thing he knew in politics, he should be ready to maintain the principles he had asserted ; to maintain that the rights of man were, in fact, the basis and foundation of every rational constitution, and even of the British constitution itself. If such principles were dangerous, from his right honourable friend he had learned them. During the American war, they had together rejoiced at the successes of Washington, and sympathized, almost in tears, on the fall of Montgomery. From his right honourable friend he had learned that the revolt of a whole people could never be countenanced and encouraged, but must have been provoked ; and he had said, with equal energy and emphasis, that he could not draw a bill of indictment against a whole people. His right honourable friend had since learnt to draw such a bill of indictment, and to crowd it with technical epithets ; such as false, malicious, wicked, by the instigation of the devil, not having the fear of God before your eyes, and so forth. He could not help feeling joy ever since France had founded, on the rights of man, her constitution ; rights on which the British constitution itself was founded. Neither the authority of books nor the powers of eloquence could induce him to change or abandon that opinion ; he differed with his right honourable friend *toto cælo*.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Burke, in a grave and governed tone, observed, that, although he had been so often called to order, he had listened, without interrupting it, to, perhaps, the most disorderly speech ever delivered in that house. His words and conduct throughout had been misrepresented, and a personal attack made from a quarter most unexpected, after a friendship and intimacy of more than two-and-twenty years. Not only had his public conduct, words, and writings, been alluded to, in the severest terms, but confidential conversations and private opinions had been introduced to prove his inconsistency. He had met with great unfairness. However, when and as often as this subject could be fairly discussed, he was ready to meet the right ho-

nourable gentleman hand to hand, and foot to foot. He was ready to state his proofs for all facts, to which public proof was applicable ; but he could not produce all his evidence, because, in the present state of things in the happy country of France, he might subject the relators to the fashionable summary justice of the *lanterne*. He was accused of misrepresenting what Mr. Fox had said on a former day ; he owned he was not present ; but he had opened to him, very particularly, the plan of his speech, how far he meant to go, and what limits he proposed to himself. He had fully and particularly detailed his reasons forming his opinions : right honourable gentlemen had entirely disagreed with him ; but they had no quarrel. After stating some further particulars of their late meeting, he observed on the modern practice of extolling the French constitution, or, as some modified it, the French revolution : he could not make the distinction : the constitution, if the French had any, was the effect and consequence of their revolution. All who disapproved of the anarchy and confusion that had taken place, or could not foresee the benefits that were to arise out of it, were stigmatised as enemies to liberty and to the British constitution ; such charges were false, unfounded, misapplied, and every way unfair. In comparison with this constitution, that of England was depreciated ; and Mr. Fox, on a former day, had termed the constitution of France the most glorious and stupendous fabric that ever was reared by human wisdom.

Notwithstanding the disorderly rage for order which had been displayed, he maintained that the discussion on the Quebec bill did present a proper opportunity for comparing the French with the English constitution ; but he denied having provoked this discussion, for the purpose of giving an advantage to the right honourable gentleman's enemies ; on the contrary, not only had he found all those from whom he had been used to expect countenance, united against him, but the right honourable gentleman, with considerable asperity, had ripped up the whole course and

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tenor of his life, public and private, exposing all his failings and imperfections. In the present debate, after he had been fatigued with skirmishes of order, which were wonderfully managed by his light troops, the right honourable gentleman had brought down the whole strength and heavy artillery of his own judgment, eloquence, and abilities, to crush him at once, by declaring a censure upon his whole life, conduct, and opinions.

While Mr. Burke was proceeding to explain the difference between the English constitution and that of France, Mr. Fox quitted the House for a moment; and twenty or thirty of his adherents moved, as if they intended also to depart. Mr. Burke, considering this act as a fulfilment of the threat uttered by Mr. Fox, said, the right honourable gentleman had been supported by a corps of well-disciplined troops, expert in their manœuvres, and obedient to the word of their commander. Mr. Grey called him to order, as such imputations were irregular; but Mr. Burke, refusing to apologise, continued his speech. If, in the present times, there was no imminent danger, yet a period of scarcity and tumult might come, and it was safer and wiser to prevent than to remedy an evil. On this point, he referred to the year 1780, when his cautions to the House to beware of the Protestant Association were disregarded; and, in the scenes of destruction and disorder which ensued, the houses of some of the greatest and best men that ever adorned the country, the Marquis of Rockingham and Sir George Savile, beset by the mob, were defended only by an armed force.

Returning then to his friendship for Mr. Fox, he briefly recapitulated the political questions upon which they had differed, particularly parliamentary reform, the Dissenters, and the Royal Marriage Act; but no difference of opinion had ever before, for a single moment, interrupted their friendship. It certainly was indiscretion, at any period, but especially at his time of life, to provoke enemies, or give his friends occasion to desert him; yet, if his firm and

steady adherence to the British constitution placed him in such a dilemma, he would risk all; and, as public duty and public prudence taught him, with his last words exclaim: "Fly from the French constitution." [Mr. Fox here whispered, that "there was no loss of friends."] Mr. Burke said, Yes, there was a loss of friends—he knew the penalty of his conduct—he had done his duty, at the price of his friend—their friendship was at an end. He then solemnly invoked the two great political leaders, whose rivalry divided the house, to concur in endeavours to save the constitution, and, making a sublime address to the Deity, concluded with moving an amendment on Lord Sheffield's motion.

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He disclaims
all future
friendship
with Mr. Fox.

After a pause, occasioned by a convulsive agitation, relieved at last by a flood of tears, Mr. Fox said, that, grating as it was to be unkindly treated by those who were under obligations to us, such treatment was still more painful when it proceeded from those to whom we felt the greatest obligations, and who, notwithstanding their harshness and severity, must still be loved and esteemed. He could not forget that, when a boy almost, he had been in the habit of receiving favours from his right honourable friend, that their friendship had grown with their years, and that it had continued for upwards of five and twenty years, for the last twenty of which they had acted together, and lived on terms of the most familiar intimacy. They had differed on other subjects, and still remained friends; why might they not still do so? The conduct of his right honourable friend had afforded Mr. Pitt an opportunity of unjustly imputing to him republican principles. It might be proper to declare opinions on the French revolution; but they might have been produced on any other measure with less injury to him than on the Quebec bill. His right honourable friend, he said, had heaped on him ignominious terms; but, when Mr. Burke said he did not remember any, Mr. Fox, instead of justifying his assertion, by adducing instances, answered, that, if so, they were also out of his mind for ever; they were obliterated and forgiven.

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He defended the members near him against the charge of being a phalanx of disciplined troops, declaring, upon his honour, that no one who had called his right honourable friend to order had been desired by him to do so: on the contrary, he had earnestly intreated several of them not to interrupt.

Mr. Fox then entered into a vindication of the French revolution, as abridging the enormous influence of the crown; and of the constitution, not as perfect, but to be amended by degrees. After expatiating on this and other subjects, he returned to his difference with Mr. Burke, and, while he claimed a right to retain his own opinions, said, he would keep out of his way until time and reflection had fitted his right honourable friend to think differently, and then their friends might contrive to reunite them. On a future day, the subject might again be introduced, and he would discuss it temperately; but, at present, he would make no farther reply.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Burke observed that the tenderness which had been displayed in the beginning and conclusion of Mr. Fox's speech was quite obliterated by what had occurred in the middle. He regretted, in a tone and manner of earnestness and fervency, the proceedings of that evening, which might long be remembered by their enemies to the prejudice of both. Under the mask of kindness, a new and hostile attack was made upon his character and conduct, and his very jests brought up in judgment against him. The event of that night's debate, in which he had been interrupted without being suffered to explain, in which he had been accused without being heard in his defence, made him at a loss to understand what was either party or friendship. Mr. Fox, he said, had termed the new French system a most stupendous and glorious fabric of human integrity. He had really conceived that the right honourable gentleman possessed a much better taste in architecture than to bestow a description so magnificent on a building composed of untempered mortar; the work of Goths and Vandals, where every thing was disjointed and inverted. He observed

with great feeling and severity on the supposed religious tolerance of the French, while, in fact, the most cruel tests were imposed on the professors of Christianity—the more cruel as their direct object was to deprive them of their bread. He then feelingly expatiated on the treatment of nuns, who, while engaged only in the most painful office of humanity in visiting and attending the hospitals, had been dragged into the streets, and scourged by the sovereigns of the French nation, merely because the priest, from whom they had received the sacrament, had not submitted to the test ; and this proceeding had passed, not only unpunished, but uncensured. The new constitution was not an experiment ; it had been tried, and found productive only of evils. They would go on from tyranny to tyranny, from oppression to oppression, until, at last, the whole system would terminate in the destruction of that miserable and deluded people. He sincerely hoped that no member of that House would ever barter the constitution of this country, the eternal jewel of their souls, for a wild and visionary system, which could only lead to confusion and disorder.

To terminate the debate, Mr. Pitt reminded the House of the very extraordinary situation in which they were placed. Many hours had been employed on a question of order. One right honourable gentleman had affirmed that it was irregular to treat on the affairs of France, and yet had gone directly into that discussion ; and two other speeches had followed, the only subject of which was that revolution. He had all along been of opinion that Mr. Burke had been strictly in order in introducing his opinions, although he could not but think that, for many reasons, it would have been better if all asperity of censure had been avoided. He recommended that the present motion should be withdrawn : the noble mover himself had withdrawn from the House ; a proof that he did not expect any great effect from it. He then recapitulated the arguments used by Mr. Fox, on the intended constitution of Canada, in a manner which

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that gentleman acknowledged to be pretty fair, and successfully defended his own propositions. He considered Mr. Burke intitled to the gratitude of the country for having so ably and eloquently stated his sense of the degree of danger to our constitution, and assured him, that although he was of opinion that it was capable of gradual and temperate melioration in some particulars, yet so perfectly was he persuaded of its being preferable to any other, that he would cordially co-operate with him in taking every possible means to preserve and deliver it down to posterity, as the best security for the prosperity, freedom, and happiness of the British people.

Motion with-
drawn.

Lord Sheffield's motion was withdrawn.

11th.
Further pro-
ceedings on
the Bill.

When the Committee was again formed, and the bill considered in separate clauses, that which proposed the division of the colony occasioned some discussion, but was at length agreed to, without a division. On that which related to the establishment of a council, Mr. Fox declared his opinions, with an evident reference to former debates, and desire to explain any doubts as to their purport. He laid it down as a principle never to be departed from, that every part of the British dominions ought to possess a government, in the constitution of which, monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy were blended; nor could any government be a fit one for British subjects which did not contain its due weight of aristocracy, because that he considered to be the proper poise of the constitution, the balance that equalized and meliorated the powers of the two other extreme branches, and gave stability and firmness to the whole. On hereditary titles, he said, the prejudice in favour of ancient family, and the pride with which it was accompanied, were rightly encouraged; otherwise, one great incentive to virtue would be abolished, and the dignity as well as the domestic interest of the nation diminished. The creation of peers, as a reward for superior talents or eminent services, was the practice among nations, ancient and modern. But no such establishment could be

Mr. Fox.

proper in Canada. We might give them lords, but could not create the reverence and respect on which their dignity must depend. Property was, and ever had been, esteemed the true foundation of aristocracy. He did not mean to use the word aristocracy in the odious sense of aristocrat, as it had lately been called—he meant it in its true sense, as an indispensably necessary part of a mixed government under a free constitution. Instead, therefore, of the King's naming the council at that distance, he suggested that it should be elective: but none should be eligible who did not possess qualifications far higher than those required for members of the House of Assembly; and in like manner their electors must also possess great qualifications. He did not mean to divide the Committee on this point, but he proposed that the council should either be all nominated by the King, or all hereditary. Having pursued his argument at some length, Mr. Fox remarked, that so necessary was aristocracy to all governments, that, in his opinion, the destruction of all that had been destroyed had arisen from the neglect of that true aristocracy, upon which it depended whether a constitution should be great, energetic, and powerful, or the reverse. He was so far a republican, that he approved all governments where the *res publica* was the universal principle, and the people, as under our constitution, had considerable weight, and declared emphatically that true aristocracy gave a country that energy, spirit, and enterprize, which always made it great and happy.

Mr. Pitt heard with great satisfaction that portion of the right honourable gentleman's speech which conveyed the cordial, and, he doubted not, the sincere testimony of his attachment to the principles of our ancestors. The respect due to nobility did not rest on property alone, but also on its being an hereditary honour, derived immediately from the crown. The habits, customs, and manners of the Canadians peculiarly adapted them for the reception of hereditary honours. Some of the seigneurs were of sufficient

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property and respectability to make it fit that, among others, they should be named to those honours. The want of them had tended to accelerate the separation of our former colonies. He feared that there were not at present materials sufficient for the formation of an hereditary peerage, and therefore we could only expect, as it was an infant aristocracy, to bring it as near as circumstances would admit to our own; in time, all would become hereditary.

Mr. Burke.

Mr. Burke defended the clause on its expediency and propriety, and by historical precedent; but his speech chiefly turned on his own situation, and the circumstances attending recent debates. He spoke of his long services to the country; and now, a most insidious design was formed to ruin him in reputation, and crown his age with infamy. If he was separated from his party, if sentence of banishment had been pronounced against him, he hoped to meet a fair, open hostility, to which he would oppose himself firmly and manfully, for the very short period he should continue a member of that House*. In the newspapers favoured by the opposition, a plot! a plot! was denounced, and it was wholly ascribed to him, and he read the passage. Although Mr. Fox had reprobated his book in all its essential parts and principles, he avowed it, and was ready to justify himself in the face of that House, and of his country, and in the face of an adversary, the most able, eloquent, and powerful that ever was encountered. He had written it to counteract the machinations of a most desperate and malignant faction. For this was he delivered over to infamy at the end of a long life, like the Dervise in the fable, who, after living till ninety in the supposed practice of every virtue, was tempted at last to the commission of a single crime, when the devil spat in his face as a reward for all his actions! He had not called France a republic; no! it was an anomaly in

* In these observations, Mr. Burke alluded to the attacks which had, since the former debate, been unsparingly made on him in the newspapers attached to and favoured by the opposition.

government; he knew not by what name to call it, nor in what terms to describe it:—

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“ ————— A shape,
“ If shape it might be called, that shape had none
“ Distinguishable in member, joint, or limb;
“ Or substance might be call’d that shadow seem’d,
“ For each seem’d either; black it stood as night,
“ Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
“ And shook a dreadful dart; what seem’d his head,
“ The likeness of a kingly crown had on*.

“ A cry of hell-hounds’ never-ceasing bark,
“ With wide Cerberian mouths, full loud, and rung
“ A hideous peal† ”

It was, he added, “ A shapeless monster, born of hell and chaos.” He expressed deep feeling at the application to himself of the phrase, that “ he knew not how to draw a bill of indictment against a whole people.” He knew not how to draw any such bill; he knew how to draw one against murder, treason, or felony, or against oppression, tyranny, and corruption, but not against a whole people. The House would not, he hoped, consider him a bad man, although he had been excommunicated by his party. By a party, he meant a set of men, bound and united by principles to act together; but a faction did not draw together upon any known principles; it was devoid of all principle of union and common interest. His whole public life had been consistent with his present conduct; and he now supported the monarchy, not because it was better than the aristocracy or the democracy, but because it was attacked, and endeavours were made to run it down. In conclusion, he said, that separate and unsupported as he was, let not the party who had excommunicated him imagine that he was deprived of consolation; although all was solitude without, there was sunshine and company enough within.

Mr. Fox considered Mr. Burke as having attributed to him democratic or republican sentiments, but denied the charge, although he did not like bestowing fulsome and unnecessary praises on the English con-

Mr. Fox.

* Paradise Lost, b. ii. l. 666.

† Same, l. 654.

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stitution. Those who pursued that course, he compared to Goneril and Regan, who answered the question put by their father in terms of flaming and extravagant panegyric, while the younger daughter answered, just as he would, if questioned concerning the English constitution,—that he loved it just as much as a subject of Great Britain ought to love a government under which he enjoyed such blessings. If Mr. Burke was separated from the party, it must be his own choice; and, if he should repent that separation, he might be assured his friends would ever be ready to receive, to respect, and to love him as heretofore. Then, after making some observations on the clause, and the arguments adduced in support of it, he said his principles were so far republican as that he wished rather to give the Crown less power and the people more, where it could be done with safety, in every government, old or new; on that principle he had always acted, and Mr. Burke had done the same. The constitution was more liable to be ruined by an increase of the power of the Crown, than of the people. As to inflammatory publications, if such existed, it behoved government to look to them; and if the law officers of the Crown neglected their duty, the House might remind ministers of their omission. It was misusing their functions and privileges, for any member to come down, and, by holding long discourses, personal to himself and relative to imaginary plots, prevent a committee from doing its duty.

Mr. Burke replied that eulogies on the British constitution were at least as useful as Mr. Fox's almost daily professions of admiration of the revolution in France. As to books, although there might be serious cause for alarm, when associations publicly avowed doctrines tending to alienate the minds of all who read them from the constitution; yet he had never desired the prosecution of any, although the right honourable gentleman had done so more than once. It had been said that, if he would repent, he would be received. He had gone through his youth without encountering any party disgrace, and, although he had

then, in his age, been so unfortunate as to meet it, he did not solicit the right honourable gentleman's friendship, nor that of any man, on one side of the House or the other.

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After a few more observations from other members, the clause passed as originally framed; and, at their next meeting, the committee agreed to all the other clauses.

Bill passes
the House of
Commons.

12th.

In the House of Lords, the bill occasioned one debate, in which some alterations were agreed to, and it finally passed.

30th.
Passes the
House of
Lords.

With the last-mentioned debate in the House of Commons, all appearances of personal friendship between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke ceased; and it became evident to the public that a decided schism had taken place in the opposition party, although its extent or exact sequel could not be ascertained. In reviewing this remarkable conflict, the particulars of which are so minutely recorded, it appears that Mr. Burke, unaided and unsupported, was exposed to a series of virulent attacks, while the clamour of faction drowned his voice, repeated interruption ruffled his temper, and the personal insolence and contumelious disrespect of some, who, in former days, had kindled their feeble luminaries at the broad and radiant blaze of his mighty intellect, inflamed his anger and added to his indignation. Mr. Fox, on the contrary, had the advantages derived from his ascendancy over his party, the influence of his ability in debate, and still more of those amiable manners which predisposed those who knew him to continue their attachment, and inspired confidence in all he said, as the production of unpremeditated sincerity, and an almost puerile candour. Yet, amid the pressures which were enforced against him, Mr. Burke rose with the strength of a giant and with the energy of inspired genius and unconquerable patriotism. His connexion with the world and its promiscuous scenes had not been such as to render the dissolution of a long-formed and intimate friendship matter of indifference; and, if he disdained to court opinion by any affected display of regret, he concealed the

Result of the
late alter-
cations.

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feelings of a wounded heart, while his lofty spirit of patriotism urged him to make every sacrifice, to strip himself of every accustomed protection and solace, when required by the powerful voice of truth and of his country.

It is very difficult to believe that the attack of Mr. Fox, and all the circumstances which preceded and accompanied it, were not carefully premeditated, and the conduct of his friends precisely and methodically arranged. From the time when Mr. Sheridan had made his attack on Mr. Burke*, it became obvious that Mr. Fox could not continue the friend of both; and, all circumstances considered, it was not difficult to foresee to which side he would incline. The publication of Mr. Burke's *Reflections* rendered indifference or neutrality nearly impossible; and, as a public rupture must take place, plans were most artfully arranged for giving pre-eminence and popularity to Mr. Fox, and casting his intended opponent as much as possible into the shade. Before the meeting of Parliament, Mr. Burke had been the subject of daily scurrility, particularly in those papers which were supported by and devoted to the opposition party. Every charge that malice could suggest, or falsehood fashion, was daily advanced: pecuniary corruption, political apostacy, and even an adherence to Popery, were among the serious imputations; while many, who had never before been suspected of wit, made themselves exceedingly pleasant by smart paragraphs on the swinish multitude, the beatific vision of Marie Antoinette, and the age of chivalry.

In the debates, Mr. Fox did not appear like a man who spoke on the sudden inspiration of the occasion, but as one who had treasured up and arranged every phrase which could most annoy and injure the man whose alienation from him he appeared to deplore. In Mr. Burke's absence, he introduced a contemptuous remark on the age of chivalry; in the course of the debates, he referred back to a phrase used by his

* See Chapter 64. Ante, p. 473.

friend in the early part of the American war—that he could not draw a bill of indictment against a whole people* ; and when he spoke of their weeping together over the fate of Montgomery, he disclosed that which must, if true, have been most private and confidential ; for, whatever praise the bravery and military conduct of Montgomery might claim, whatever feeling might arise from the contemplation of his youth and his generous daring, men in general were not then so prepared for resistance in arms to the authority of their sovereign as to forget that “ the spotted rebel taints “ the soldier.” Nor can any thing be imagined more galling, more at variance with the feelings of affection and expressions of regard put forth by Mr. Fox, than his contemptuous allusions to Mr. Burke’s age and vanity, and the supercilious intimation that he might yet find grace and reconciliation with his party on the easy terms of renouncing his errors and reforming his ways.

It has been asserted that Mr. Fox took no share in the unmannerly and insulting interruptions which beset Mr. Burke, when he attempted to address the chair ; but whoever knows the accuracy and care with which party movements were, at that time, arranged and conducted, will not believe that such a proceeding, so formally announced, and so methodically prosecuted, originated in the moment, or was kept a secret from the great leader. Another circumstance to shew the combination, is, that Mr. Sheridan took no ostensible share in the proceedings : his antecedent quarrel with Mr. Burke made it equally improper that he should appear as an assistant to Mr. Fox, or that the present should be identified, or even connected, with the antecedent dispute. Every circumstance shews that these parties knew and concurred in the intended course, and joined in a common effort to depress the character of Mr. Burke.

Since the disgraceful period when the rage of fanaticism had carried the flames of desolation through the

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State of the
Roman Catho-
lies.

* March 22, 1775. Speech on resolutions for conciliation with the colonies. See Burke’s Works, vol. iii. p. 69. See also Chap. 25.

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Feb. 21.
Motion for a
bill for their
relief by Mr.
Mitford.

cities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, and London*, the state of British subjects professing the Roman Catholic religion had not met the attention of the British legislature. No petition from them had been presented, nor had the press issued forth their remonstrances or complaints. Yet the hardships of their condition, and the severe, but no longer necessary, penalties and restraints to which they continued subject, did not escape attention; and measures, devised by some of the most respectable of their community and sanctioned by government, were prepared and submitted to Parliament.

Mr. Mitford moved for leave to bring in a bill for the relief of persons calling themselves *Protesting Dissenting Catholics*, under certain conditions and restrictions. Few persons, he observed, were apprized of the extent or severity of the enactments which still continued in force. In a popular abridgment, called *Burns' Ecclesiastical Law*, the recapitulation of them extended over seventy pages. He shewed that, by these statutes, *Papist priests* were guilty of high treason, and would suffer death for offences in their nature trivial, such as persuading others to be of their religion. Having enumerated other laws of rigour against the clergy, with proper animadversions, he turned to the hardships which bore upon the laity; reciting the penalties to which they were liable for hearing mass, for not going to church, and for various other offences; and, after a circumstantial detail on this part of his subject, reminded the House that, at the time when these very severe laws commenced, *Queen Elizabeth* had been excommunicated by the Pope, and her subjects absolved from their allegiance: consequently such laws were dictated by a spirit of resentment, creating severity and tending to cruelty. He next adverted to the extensive power formerly arrogated by the Pope, but wrested from him by *Henry the Eighth*, and the security afforded by the various oaths of supremacy. In Catholic countries, particularly in France, even before the revolution, the severe laws against

* See Chapter 38.

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Protestants had been mitigated or abolished; and he trusted the justice of Parliament would not be withheld from a body of men who shewed as much loyalty as any other class of his Majesty's subjects. Already, he observed, had the experiment been made by the legislature of Ireland; and, although the people of that country were Roman Catholics in a far greater proportion than in this, no evil effects had been experienced.

After an observation from the Speaker, that this proposition, as it affected the established religion, must be submitted to a committee of the whole House, which was readily acquiesced in, Mr. Windham seconded the motion. The only grounds, he observed, which could be alleged in favour of laws of penalty for religious opinions, were, that the opinions were adverse to salvation, and therefore, for the party's own sake, ought to be prohibited; or that the principles arising from them were calculated to make bad citizens and dangerous subjects. The former led to persecution; the latter could not be extended further than absolute necessity required. He could not altogether agree with Mr. Fox in his observations, on the motion for repeal of the test, that religious opinions ought not to exclude men from civil offices; yet no more restraint could be justified than the public safety absolutely required. The Catholics did not ask to be admitted to places of power and trust, but to live in a free and enlightened country, exempt from the severe penalties imposed by laws which were by connivance evaded, and which, for that very reason, ought not to be suffered to disgrace the statute book. The power of the Pope, in countries naturally subject to his religious dominion, had become a mere spectre, fit to frighten in the dark, but which vanished in the light of reason and knowledge. Mr. Windham took notice of the opinion that a Roman Catholic's oath was of no avail, because the Pope would grant a dispensation. The folly and fallacy of this reasoning would be evident when it was recollected that Catholic peers would not take their seats merely because conscience would not

Seconded by
Mr. Windham.

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Objections of
Mr. Fox.

permit them to take an oath. Catholics were believed on their oaths in many other cases; and if the Pope could grant a dispensation, he could not absolve them from custom, from their feelings, from a sense of honour, from the blood rushing to their face, and from blushing and trembling with shame, at the idea of taking an oath to establish a vile falsehood.

Mr. Pitt.

Although all parties agreed in the propriety of introducing the bill, considerable differences of opinion prevailed as to its details. Mr. Fox considered the measure not sufficiently extensive. The state, he said, had no right to inquire into the opinions of the people, either political or religious; they had only a right to take cognizance of their actions. He would not consent to subject the Catholics to any protestation whatever. There was no reason why a peer or a gentleman of that religion should not sit in either house of Parliament. In Prussia, Holland, America, and France, universal toleration prevailed. Mr. Pitt controverted many opinions of Mr. Fox and of Mr. Windham, and a day was fixed for the committee.

March 1.
Bill in a com-
mittee.

Mr. Mitford then explained that he did not mean to enable Catholics to hold places of trust and profit: the protestation to be required was principally a denial of the Pope's power to absolve subjects from their allegiance; a point which, in former reigns, many Catholics had insisted on, and been distinguished by their disapproving brethren under the names of protesting dissenters and remonstrants.

Mr. Fox.

Mr. Fox considered all tests in religion and politics, except the oath of allegiance, unjust and unwise.

Debates.

In the debates, the oaths to be taken by the Catholics were objected to, as they imputed opinions, such as the Pope's infallibility, mental reservation, and the power of remitting sins. Mr. William Smith urged the rights, not of the Catholics alone, but of all Dissenters, to the enjoyment of all social privileges. Mr. Powys vindicated the oath, as having been dictated by the parties interested. On the denial of the Roman Pontiff's infallibility, many objections were urged. Mr. William Smith wished to leave him all

power of absolution, except as to original sin. Mr. Fox complained of the term Papists as being illiberally used in describing the Catholics. Many of the imputations against them, as to matters of doctrine, were not avowed by them, and should be viewed as mere calumnies. He wished the oath, if any, to be made as general as possible; but even then he must disapprove of it, as he was adverse to every test, whether civil or religious. Other members spoke; but the bill passed the lower House, with very slight alterations.

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In the upper House, Lord Rawdon, in moving the second reading, defended the existing church establishment, the dignified state and the emoluments it afforded to the hierarchy, and the pre-eminence with which it was most rightly invested. In every community, the majority had a right to ascertain the form of public worship, and call on every individual to support that establishment; but they had no right to refuse to any portion of society the freedom of paying homage to the Deity, in the mode most consonant to their consciences, provided it was not repugnant to the general principles of decency and morality, nor connected with temporal tenets, dangerous to civil tranquillity. His lordship considered the ample allowance of our ecclesiastical establishment, not as vitiating the simplicity of the church, but affording an useful incitement to learning and decorous manners in the inferior clergy; while the dignity of the episcopal station, and the seat which it conferred in that House, tended to connect the profession of the church with great families and permanent interests, in a manner which theory and experience united to recommend. His lordship argued, from the loyal conduct of the Catholics in Ireland, where they formed a preponderating majority, that indulgences might safely be extended to those of England, where their numbers were so small in the scale of population.

May 31.
Debates in the
Lords.

Lord Rawdon.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, Dr. Moore, made some observations on the oath proposed by the Bill; and, on this ground, he was followed by Dr. Horsley,

The Arch-
bishop of Can-
terbury.

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Bishop of St.
David's.

Bishop of St. David's, who, while he maintained the necessity for a church establishment, required the utmost extension of toleration toward Christians of every denomination. The Catholic tenets were no longer dangerous to the established church or the state. He disapproved of the bill, not for the relief it tendered, but as inadequate to its own purpose, and partial in its operation. It would relieve such Roman Catholics as would take the oath, and none else. Now, a great number,—in fact, a great majority,—would reject the terms in which this oath was drawn. They were ready to swear allegiance to the King,—to abjure the pretender,—to renounce the Pope's authority in civil and temporal matters,—to disclaim the doctrine that faith is not to be kept with heretics,—that persons may be murdered under the pretence that they are heretics, that princes, excommunicated by the see of Rome, might be murdered by their subjects, as impious and unchristian; but they scrupled to apply the epithets of impious, unchristian, and damnable, to the doctrine respecting the deposing power of the Pope. This doctrine was rather to be called false than impious—traitorous than unchristian. In truth, this scruple was founded on a tender regard for the memory of their progenitors. Some two centuries since, this error, however absurd and malignant, was, like other absurd and malignant errors, universal; yet, there lived in those times many men of distinguished piety and virtue, who acquiesced in this error as a speculative doctrine, although they never acted upon it. Their descendants thought it hard that men of probity and virtue, for an error in mere speculation generally received, and by them never acted upon, should be stigmatized as devoid of piety, as no Christians, and as persons that died under a sentence of eternal damnation. They were ready to renounce the civil authority of the Pope; but they could not acquiesce in the words which denied his spiritual authority; that they could not conscientiously abjure. This spiritual authority did, in fact, interfere with the King's supremacy. If it were established, no consecrations and

ordinations could be valid unless they emanated from the see of Rome. Then the bishops of the church of England were no bishops; they could have no right to sit in Parliament; no priest of their ordination could have a right to any ecclesiastical temporalities. These were striking instances; many others might be found: but the most to be expected of conscientious Catholics would be, not to renounce all authority carrying this inference,—for that were to renounce the Pope as their spiritual head,—but that they should bind themselves never to act upon those principles which, in theory, they could not renounce; never to attack, but, on the contrary, to defend, the constitution and government in either branch. These engagements those Roman Catholics who scrupled this oath were ready and desirous to give, in the most explicit and unequivocal terms; to bind themselves by oath to defend to the utmost of their power the civil and ecclesiastical establishment of the country, even although the Catholic powers in Europe, with the Pope at their head, were to levy war against the King, for the express purpose of establishing the Roman Catholic religion. Different portions of the Catholics were already at variance, and had published adverse declarations on this subject. As the Bill would relieve only those who would take the oath, leaving the penal statutes in full force against the rest, these scrupulous persons would be open to laws which might be enforced against them by those who had conformed. A horrible persecution might arise. Miscreants, base informers, might be enriched with the fortunes, gaols crowded with the persons, and the streets stream with the blood, of conscientious men and good subjects! And of all this cruelty, my lords, he said, if it should take place, the laws of the country will get the credit. Three out of the four Roman Catholic bishops, who call themselves apostolical vicars for the four districts of the country, have promulgated an encyclical letter, reprobating the oath; and they insist, that a conscientious Catholic ought not to take any oath declaratory of an opinion on doctrinal points, until it has received the approba-

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1791.

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1791.

Oath
amended.3rd June.
Bill passed;

its effect.

tion of his ecclesiastical superiors. It would be perfectly nugatory to pass a law giving relief on the condition of an oath, which many of the persons to whom it is offered say, "We cannot take this oath." The remedy would be to find one sufficient for the security of government, which the majority of Roman Catholics have already taken, and the apostolical vicars, having themselves taken it, must approve. Such was the oath required by the law of 1778.

Several other peers spoke in the debate; the bill was committed; and, on the motion of the Bishop of Saint David's, and contrary to his declared anticipation, the oath was so framed as to obviate all his objections, and the bill passed.

By this act, all the severe restrictions and penalties were removed from those Roman Catholics who would comply with its requisitions, to appear at one of the courts at Westminster, or at the quarter sessions, and make and subscribe a declaration that they profess the Roman Catholic religion, and also an oath exactly similar to that required by the statute of 1778. On this declaration and oath being duly made, they were enabled to profess and perform the offices of their religion, to keep schools, to exercise parochial and other offices in person or by deputy, and the ministers of that religion were exempted from serving on juries and from parochial offices. Their congregations were protected from disturbance; but their priests were restrained from officiating in places consecrated to the burial of protestants, and from wearing their habits, except in their own places of worship. They were also restrained from establishing religious orders; and the endowment of schools and colleges was still to be deemed superstitious and unlawful. No person could in future be summoned to take the oath of supremacy, and the declaration against transubstantiation. Nor were Roman Catholics, who had qualified, removable from London and Westminster; or punishable for coming into the presence or palace of the King or Queen. They were no longer obliged to register their names and estates, or enroll their deeds and wills;

and every Roman Catholic, who had qualified, might be permitted to act as a barrister, attorney, or votary*.

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Among the subjects which engaged the attention of Parliament was a bill, introduced by Mr. Fox, for altering the law respecting libels; it occasioned several debates, but its progress was interrupted by the prorogation. A bill was also passed, regulating the trade in corn, and ineffectual motions were made for abolishing the test law, and for altering the constitution of the burghs of Scotland. The session was terminated by a speech from the throne, in which the state of public affairs was mentioned, but without any indication of intentions or expectations.

1791.
Libel bill.

Corn bill.

Session ended.

June 10.

* See a note by Professor Christian, in his edition of Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. iv. p. 58.

CHAPTER THE SEVENTY-FIRST.

1789—1790—1791—1792.

Affairs of India.—System of Earl Cornwallis as Governor-general.—Hatred of Tippoo Sultan to the British Government.—His military preparations—attacks the Rajah of Travancore.—Cession of Crangenore and Jaycottah by the Dutch.—Pretensions of Tippoo.—Conduct of the Madras Government—of Earl Cornwallis—proposes a reference.—Tippoo besieges Travancore—repulsed in an attack—refuses a reference—gains the lines—takes Crangenore—Jaycottah and other forts.—Situation of Earl Cornwallis—his plan of operations for the British troops—and the allies.—March of General Medows.—Tippoo retires—advance of the British—Coimbatore taken—other forts taken.—Masterly movement of Tippoo—forces the British to evacuate Sattimangulum—and retreat.—Action near Occaro—other actions—manœuvres of the opposed armies.—Junction of Colonel Maxwell with General Medows.—Tippoo offers to treat—his attempt on the Carnatic—takes Trincomale and other forts—his intercourse with Pondicherry.—Debates in Parliament—motion of Mr. Hippisley—of Mr. Francis—debate—Motion by Mr. Dundas—by Lord Porchester.—Progress of the war.—Earl Cornwallis takes the command—active hostilities begun.—The Nizam—the Mahrattas—the British troops—General Abercromby.—Earl Cornwallis.—Siege of Bangalore—its capture—consequences—junction with the Nizam—capture of Doonally—other places.—Earl Cornwallis advances toward Seringapatam.—Advance of Tippoo—battle at Arakeery. Difficulties of Earl Cornwallis.—Retreat to Bangalore—state of Tippoo—he sends a flag of truce—British prisoners found at Hooliadroog.—Tippoo be-

sieges Coimbatore—which is taken.—Exertions of the allies—Capture of hill-forts.—Nundydroog.—Success of Tippoo.—Capture of Penagra.—Earl Cornwallis again advances.—Naval engagement.—Savandroog taken—other forts surrender.—Operations of Purseram Bhow.—Siege of Seringapatam formed.—Conduct of Tippoo.—Night attack on his camp—he proposes to treat.—Progress of the siege—preliminaries signed—Tippoo's sons given as hostages—insincerity of Tippoo—consequent proceedings of Earl Cornwallis—definitive treaty signed.—Observations.

IN accepting the government of India, Lord Cornwallis proposed, as a system, to retain entire the British possessions, but not to enfeeble them by extension ; to observe and to enforce the observance of treaties, making the acquiescence of native powers easy, adhering to the rules of moderation and justice ; and to avoid all peculiar connexions or compacts which could engage his country in war as an ally, when she had no hostility as a principal ;—a liberal and prudent line of conduct, dictated alike by his lordship's own brave and honourable mind, and imparted as the view of government and the Company in his instructions*.

Had all India been under the rule of princes endowed with wisdom, justice, and moderation, this course might have been preserved, and much calamity avoided ; but one spirit, ambitious, turbulent, and faithless, uniting with ferocious hatred a mean personality, prevented the accomplishment of the Governor-general's intentions, and drew upon the country the miseries of war. Ever since the treaty of Mangalore†, Tippoo Sultan had persisted in evading the fulfilment of its stipulations, and in making, with equal vigour and prudence, preparations for hostility and conquest. He was continually augmenting his troops by new levies ; and his artillery, ample in force, was directed by skilful Europeans engaged in his service.

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1789.
System of
Lord Cornwallis as governor
of India.

Hatred of
Tippoo Sultan
against the
English.

* Malcolm's Political History of India, vol. i. p. 49.

† 11th March, 1784. See chap. 50.

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1789.

He attacks
the Rajah of
Travancore.

Cession of
Cranganore
and Jycottah
by the Dutch.

Pretensions of
Tippoo.

Chains of posts secured his own territory, while strong bodies of men, and abundant stores of provisions on the droogs*, secured him and menaced those whom he should consider his enemies. At an early period of his government, Lord Cornwallis adopted a similar plan for protection of the forts on the frontiers and the coast: but no immediate sign of active hostility appeared.

Ambition, avarice, and fanaticism, at length, directed the arms of Tippoo against the Rajah of Travancore; and, as he well knew the alliance between that potentate and the English government, he probably desired a consequence which he could not overlook, and flattered himself that he should at once expel the Hindoos of Travancore, and their allies, the English, from the Carnatic. The ground of his quarrel was remote and extraordinary; more than two hundred and eighty years had elapsed since the Portuguese had possessed themselves of two districts called Cranganore and Jycottah; both had been surrendered to the Dutch, and retained, without paying tribute or acknowledging sovereignty to any power in India. At the present period, the Dutch, apprehensive that Tippoo intended to take these settlements, as a step toward their expulsion from Cochin, surrendered them to the Rajah, the Sultan. Desirous of obtaining possession of Travancore, which would place him in immediate contact with Tinnevely, an extreme and feeble point of the British possessions, to establish a claim, and supersede the contract between the Dutch and the Rajah, the Sultan alleged that these territories had always formed part of the kingdom of Mysore, and that neither the Portuguese nor the Dutch had ever any right to them. Such a suggestion, from a sovereign so recent, against a title so ancient, seems almost ludicrous; but he who made it well knew, that in the field, and not in the closet, by arms and not by arguments, the question would be decided; and he made his preparations accordingly.

* Fortified hills: this word will frequently occur in the following narrative.

To the representations of the Rajah, the Madras government made languid answers, and even seemed disposed to allow the validity of Tippoo's assertions. They declined to assist in defending any country which did not strictly belong to him; and this determination accelerated the conclusion of the treaty between the Rajah and the Dutch, which had been pending nearly two years.

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LXXI.

1789.
Conduct of
the Madras
government.

The Governor-general at first adopted the opinions entertained at Madras; but, when more correctly informed, he saw that it was proper, and even necessary, under the aspect of circumstances, and on the faith of treaties, to consider any aggression by Tippoo on Travancore as a declaration of war. Unless assisted by the French, which was hardly to be hoped for, the Sultan could not, without extreme imprudence, incur the hostility of England. He had been apprised of the certain consequence of his incroaching on the territory of the Rajah; but as a temper so violent baffled calculations founded on the rules of prudence, his lordship, judiciously anticipating events, arranged vigorous and prudent plans, both military and financial.

Sept.
Conduct of
Lord
Cornwallis.

Still, to avoid hostilities, he proposed a reference to commissioners, by whose arbitrament the possession of the disputed territories should be determined*.

Proposes a
reference.

Without noticing this proposal, Tippoo, with fifteen thousand men, attacked the city of Travancore, which was assailable only on one side.

Oct.
Tippoo be-
siegues Travan-
core.

At the head of ten thousand men, after a tedious and difficult march, he surprised Sharapootamally, a pass supposed to be in perfect security, and turned the lines of the Hindoos; but a few Nairs, valiantly defending a narrow defile, arrested his progress; reinforcements arrived, and the Sultan was repulsed with great loss, and imminent danger of his person. Such was the ferocity which animated the combatants, that, while of the invaders fifteen hundred were ascertained to be slain, only forty were taken prisoners.

Dec. 29th.
Repulsed in
an attack.

Tippoo was of a spirit too fierce and haughty to

Refuses a
reference.

* Mill, vol. v. p. 267, et seqq.

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LXXI.

1789.

bend under a first misfortune, or give up brilliant hopes and cherished projects without further trial. He had not yet noticed the proposal of a reference; the subject was pressed; but his answer, when given, was too presumptuous and arrogant to afford the least hope of an accommodation*.

1790.
Gains the
lines.
March.
April 9th.
15th.

During a short truce which followed the late encounter, the besiegers pressed their approaches with skill and diligence; the Rajah's guns were rendered unserviceable or dismounted; his troops failed in a bold, but ill-concerted, sally; a practicable breach of great extent was made, and, without much further resistance, Tippoo gained possession of the lines; the inhabitants of the city fled with precipitation, and were saved from total destruction principally by two battalions of Madras sepoy, under Captain Knox, who were stationed at Shandamungulum.

18th.
Takes
Cranganore.

As the victor advanced to besiege Cranganore, terror precipitated the motions of his opponents. Fortunately, the small force of Captain Knox, augmented by a detachment from Bombay, led by Colonel Hartley, gave them some confidence, and prevented them from abandoning the country. The siege still advanced, and, as Colonel Hartley's force was not adequate to the protection of a place deficient in artillery, ammunition, and stores, Tippoo gained possession; the natives sought refuge in flight; Jycotta, and several other inconsiderable forts, surrendered, and, for the present, nothing appeared capable of arresting the career of the conqueror.

Jycotta and
other forts.

Situation of
Earl
Cornwallis.

No act of direct hostility toward England had yet been committed by the Sultan, although many circumstances of insult and oppression shewed that opportunity, rather than inclination, was wanting; and Earl Cornwallis found that he could no longer persevere in his pacific system. Our ally, the Rajah, appealed to treaties in demanding aid; the Mahrattas and the Nizam tendered their co-operation against an enemy whose tyranny menaced the safety of all; and a view of

* Mackenzie's History of the War with Tippoo Sultan, c. i.

the danger to which British interests were exposed, assisted in determining the measures of the Governor-general.

Orders had long before been transmitted to the Madras government, to consider any attack upon the Rajah of Travancore as a declaration of hostility against Great Britain, and to make corresponding preparations. Earl Cornwallis having concluded treaties of alliance with the Mahrattas and the Peishwa, the Nizam and some other native powers formed a general plan of a campaign; it was, that the grand army should reduce the Coimbatore country, and other bordering tracts below the Gauts*; and then advance by the Gujelhetty Pass, or Gaut, to the siege of Seringapatam, Tippoo's capital. It was expected that the possession of the Coimbatore country would not only ensure supplies of provisions for the campaign above the Gauts, but deprive Tippoo of one of his principal resources. At the same time, the Bombay army, under General Abercromby, was to undertake the reduction of the country lying on the west of the Gauts; and afterwards, according to circumstances, co-operate with the grand army under General Medows. The safety of the Carnatic was provided for, by a force, styled, from its position, the central army, commanded by Colonel Kelly: it was stationed in the line between Madras and the passes leading to Mysore; and was soon to be reinforced by Colonel Cockerell, with a strong detachment from Bengal.

Our allies, the Poonah Mahrattas, and the Nizam, were respectively to attack the enemy's dominions in the quarter bordering on theirs; and to penetrate toward Seringapatam, as to a common centre. A brigade of British troops was attached to each of these bodies.

General Medows, having joined the grand army, saw the lines under arms, consisting of about fourteen

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LXXI.

1790.

His plan of
operations for
the British
troops,

May.

and the allies.

24th.
March of
General
Medows.

* The word Gaut, in a limited sense, means a pass through or over mountains: but in a more extensive signification, it is applied to the mountains themselves: and when the Mysore country is known to be a kind of *Table land*, or tract elevated far above the rest of the Peninsula, the phrases above and below the Gauts will be readily understood.

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LXXI.

1790.

26th.

thousand effective men. They marched from Trichinopoly Plain, toward the Coimbettore country, with forty days' provisions on bullocks, and five more in the knapsacks*. The Bombay army, under General Abercromby, was a compact and a well-appointed body, and a squadron, under Commodore Cornwallis, was ready to facilitate communication and convey reinforcements and supplies to parties near the coast.

April 6th.
Letter from
Tippoo.

Before any military movement was made, Tippoo sent to General Medows a letter, full of friendly professions, and proposing an embassy of a dignified person, and some others, to offer explanations. In his answer, the English general professed the resolution of his nation neither to offer nor submit to an insult; he allowed to Tippoo, except for his cruelty to his prisoners, the character of a great prince; but informed him that, by making an attack on the Rajah of Travancore, the ally of Great Britain, war was considered to be declared.

Answer.

Tippoo retires.

On receipt of this announcement, Tippoo departed for Seringapatam, directing all his regular troops to assemble in that quarter, and leaving the adjacent countries with the stores he had collected, to the guard of looties and peons†.

June 15th.
Advance of
the British.

The British troops immediately took possession of Carrore, a strong undefended fort, which served as a military station. Little impeded by the fierce, though desultory, attacks of the looties, the English, in rapid succession, and with inconsiderable loss, captured several forts with ample stores, and advanced to Coimbatore, which yielded without a struggle; and, as it was a post of considerable importance, they strengthened it with a garrison.

July 21st.

Coimbatore
taken.

July 23rd.
Skirmishes.

Hitherto the British troops had seen no military opponents but the looties; but they were now apprized that Sahed Sahib, a natural son of the Sultan, was approaching with three thousand regular horse,

* From Major Rennell's *Marches of the British Armies in India*, p. 15, et seqq.

† Looties are predatory and irregular cavalry; peons, irregular and undisciplined infantry. See Mackenzie, vol. i. p. 67.

and, in the neighbourhood of Damicotta, some unimportant skirmishes left the English free to establish a line of forts from the Coromandel coast to the foot of the Guzzlehatty pass. Intelligence was also received that the Sultan had collected a powerful army to the eastward of Seringapatam; and a force was prepared, and confided to Colonel Stuart, for the capture of Palligautcherry; but his movement was prevented by an inundation, proceeding from the monsoon, which set in at a period unusually early. Erroad, however, was captured by a detachment under Lieutenant Colonel Oldham, aided by Lieutenant Colonel Deare. Dindigul was summoned by Captain Oram; but a stern refusal, accompanied with menaces in case of any other summons, was returned by Hyder Albas, the Sultan's killedar. Works were opened, and, after a cannonade of two days, a storm was attempted under the immediate command of Colonel Stuart, but repelled. The works, although of great strength, being much injured, and the garrison, through alarm, threatening desertion, the brave killedar found it necessary to display a flag of truce; and, after a short negotiation, surrendered on moderate and honourable terms. Provisions were obtained, although not without difficulty, from the neighbouring country, and many forts of inferior importance were taken. The season now permitting, Palligautcherry was invested. In one day, a practicable breach was effected, and operations being vigorously and judiciously continued during the night, the garrison surrendered, yielding to the captors an ample and seasonable supply of necessaries. In this period, the troops under Sahed Sahib were employed in ravaging the country, to prevent the English from obtaining supplies: several gallant skirmishes took place, and Captain Stewart captured the fort of Sattemangulum by surprise.

At this period, the progress of the British troops was impeded, and their safety put into considerable hazard, by a movement of the Sultan, equally brave in its conception and prudent in its execution. Captain Child, having been ordered to reconnoitre the country

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LXXI.

1790.

July.

August.
Other forts
taken.

20th.

Sep. 21st.

Masterly
movement of
Tippoo.

Sep. 10th.

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as far as Poongar, was supported by Major Darley, at the head of a native regiment. They found themselves unexpectedly in presence of a large body of the enemy's infantry, who had crossed the Bevannee, and were speedily supported by a considerable force of cavalry. A judicious and determined attack on this body secured the retreat of the pickets; and other vigorous conflicts, during the day, gave victory to the British troops; but it soon became apparent that rumours which for some days had been circulated of the Sultan's intention to descend into the Coimbatore country, with a very large force, through the Guzzlehatty pass, were well-founded, that he had executed that project, that a large portion of his infantry had already crossed the Bevannee river, and, consequently, that no chance of safety remained for the advanced troops, but in falling back and rejoining the main army. This point was effected with steadiness and order, and without loss; but the passage of Tippoo, with an army of forty thousand infantry and cavalry, twice that number of followers, and a powerful train of artillery, with so much secrecy, expedition, and in such perfect military order, remained a theme of astonishment, and a lesson of wholesome caution and apprehension.

Without loss of time, Tippoo brought his troops into action. The British line was formed at Sattimangulum, in a position not easily assailable; and, during a whole day, the enemy poured on one portion of it a constant discharge of artillery, which, from the fear of wanting ammunition, was not adequately replied to. Darkness put an end to the attacks, in which the English sustained a considerable loss. In a tempestuous night, a council of war was held, and the evacuation of the fort of Sattimangulum, and a general retreat, were determined on, although not without great differences of opinion. The secrecy necessary to complete success was not strictly observed, and, at four o'clock in the morning, the retreat was effected, amid great difficulty and confusion, and some artillery was inevitably abandoned.

14th.
Forces the
British to
evacuate
Sattimangu-
lum;

and retreat.

15th.

At eleven o'clock, the retreating army, having pro-

ceeded twelve miles, as far as Occaro, saw that they were pursued by an overwhelming force. Judicious measures of resistance were adopted; and, after exhausting the day in an obstinate and sanguinary contest, the British troops had the satisfaction to perceive the enemy in full retreat. No further pursuit being attempted, the English established themselves at Vel-ladi, awaiting a junction with the main body under General Medows. This officer had been apprized of the passage of Tippoo into the Coimbatore country, but did not know of the evacuation of Sattimungulum. His great endeavour now became to bring on a general action in the field, which his cautious and judicious adversary was no less solicitous to avoid. Many days were expended in manœuvres productive of no important result; rather than risque an engagement, Tippoo quitted a camp he had formed at Gopelehittypalem with precipitation, leaving to his opponents two elephants, besides bullocks and warlike stores to a great amount. The Mysorean next attempted to cut off a detachment with supplies, under Major Young, but failed. He then endeavoured to retake some garrisons which had fallen into British hands, and commenced the siege of Daraporan, in which several important days were wasted, affording time for reinforcements to arrive at Coimbatore, which secured the British force from the numbers of the enemy, and they encamped at Singanalore within six miles of Coimbatore.

Much time was spent, and great exertions made on both sides; the English endeavouring to effect a junction of their armies under General Medows and Colonel Kelly, whose death, during these operations, left the command to Colonel Maxwell. The enemy was verging toward the Carnatic, with designs not exactly known, but with an evident determination to avoid a conflict in open field. Tippoo's apparent intention was, by threatening the Carnatic, to divert the designs of the English from an invasion of his territories to a defence of their own. The junction took place at Oomaloor, giving an united force of about twenty-three

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Action near
Occaro.

Other actions.

29th.

October 2nd.

15th.

Oct. and Nov.
Manœuvres of
the opposed
armies.

21st.
Junction of
Colonel

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Maxwell with
General
Medows.

thousand effective men. Both parties pursued their plans with vigour, but without meeting in general conflict, although several sanguinary and well-contested skirmishes took place. Colonel Maxwell resolved on invading the upper countries by the pass of Coverporum, while Tippoo returned toward the Carnatic, followed by General Medows.

Dec. 5th.
Tippoo offers
to treat.

Whether sincerely, or in the hope of gaining advantage by delay, the Sultan's agents sent letters offering a reference of disputes and terms of accommodation. In answer, Captain Macauley, aid-de-camp to General Medows, professed the readiness of the British government to treat; but, as a preliminary, and a proof of sincerity in the Sultan, required that some person or place of importance should be given as a surety, and that every British captive, detained contrary to the letter of treaties, should be released. In reply, Tippoo evaded these demands, still proposing to send an ambassador of rank to confer; but Captain Macauley, while he noticed the omission of any answer to his demands, stated that, as Earl Cornwallis was now expected to assume the command in person, General Medows would not exercise his authority to treat.

Tippoo's at-
tempts in the
Carnatic.He takes
Trincomale.And other
forts.His inter-
course with
Pondicherry.

Pursuing his attempts on the Carnatic, Tippoo made ineffectual demonstrations against Tiagar and Trichinopoly, where he was resisted by British valour and discipline. He attacked Trincomale with better fortune; it was defended only by Hindoos, over whom he gained an easy victory, which he disgraced by an excess of savage cruelty. With equal success, and in fact without resistance, he possessed himself of Chitapet, Wandewash, and the Gingel hills. At Penma-wil, a post near Pondicherry, a corps of sepoys under Captain Brunton was stationed to oppose him; but they were basely betrayed by the natives, their allies, who went over to the enemy, and enabled him to capture the whole body. Having now taken his post on the Red Hills near Pondicherry, Tippoo received visits and professions which led him to hope for the assistance of France and the renewal of their ancient alliance. Probably his expectation of effective aid from the ancient

rival and enemy of England had swayed his conduct in his present aggression. He had sent to Paris, just before the troubles of the Revolution commenced, a splendid embassy, charged with costly presents to the King and Queen; the envoys were received with all the magnificence of courtly display, and departed fully impressed with an opinion that the power of France, when required, would be drawn forth in aid of the Sultan; subsequent events had prevented the accomplishment of these hopes, but it is not to be supposed that the inclination of France to oppose the interests of England was ever wanting*.

Intelligence of these events, received from time to time in England, occasioned vehement debates in Parliament. In opening the session, the King having, as already has been mentioned, adverted to the hostilities in India, Mr. Hippisley took an opportunity of calling attention to the subject. Not professing to vindicate the conduct of Tippoo (whom he described as a merciless tyrant) toward the Rajah of Travancore, still he had his rights and his wrongs; and he might have a claim on Cranganore which ought not to be resisted. He doubted the justice and policy of the war; depreciated the force and fidelity of our allies; while he magnified the strength, the resources, and the policy of Tippoo, and moved for copies or extracts of all the correspondence between the Rajah of Travancore and the government of Madras or Bengal, respecting the purchase of Cranganore, and for many other papers.

After a few observations from Mr. Francis and some other members, the papers, appearing to contain nothing improper to be disclosed, were granted.

On a subsequent day, Mr. Hippisley, having obtained the reading of a clause in the act for the better government of India, and of some resolutions, passed in 1782, on the motion of Mr. Dundas, excused him-

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Debates in
Parliament.

1790.
Nov. 26.

Dec. 21.
Motion of
Mr. Hippisley.

1791.
Feb. 28.
Motion by
Mr. Francis.

* On this subject, Mirabeau had expressed strong and not unpopular opinions. "Already England is no longer the first power in Europe. When she has lost her possessions in India, an event which can scarcely be retarded beyond two lustra, she will be a power of the third order, at least for many years."—Doubts concerning the Freedom of the Scheldt (1785), p. 8, English translation.

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self, on account of ill health, from presenting the motions he had prepared ; but Mr. Francis, in his stead, moved thirteen resolutions which declared total disapprobation of the late transactions. The war was not purely Indian, but to be supported by men and money from England ; and it was of such a nature that, in comparison with it, a Spanish war might be deemed a blessing, and a German or even an American war no calamity. Ministers, while professing to maintain peace, and renounce views of conquest, had appointed military commanders to all the governments in India. The treaties with the Mahrattas and the Nizam were mere compacts for the purpose of conquest ; and the Rajah of Travancore was only a stalking horse, and, at best, a not undeserving sufferer by the hostilities of Tippoo. The Rajah was, by treaties, entitled to our assistance, if he were not the aggressor ; but simulated cases of aggression might be contrived between native princes, cunning, but incapable of real wisdom ; and governors of British settlements, instigated by avarice or ambition. The Rajah might have learnt from the instances of so many ruined princes, and particularly his own immediate superior, the Nabob of Arcot, the danger attending British alliance. We might protect him from the sword of Tippoo, but he could never escape from our devouring friendship. In a very long argument he attempted to shew that the Rajah, and not the Sultan, was the aggressor ; that England was totally unconcerned in the war, which could only be carried on at a ruinous expense, not to be limited by eight millions ; it was carried on by an impoverished government, and could produce no other effect than that of aggrandizing and bringing nearer to our frontiers our most formidable adversary.

Debate.

Mr. Dundas, while he lamented the expense attending hostilities, ably and amply vindicated the conduct of Earl Cornwallis ; shewing the futility of Tippoo's claims, the undisguised quality of his unjust ambition, and the duty cast on Great Britain, both by sound policy and the express terms of treaties, to repel his attacks and restrain his encroachment.

Major Maitland, in a maiden speech, strongly censured the war. Mr. Wilberforce vindicated it, as just, as purely and absolutely defensive; and not to be avoided without a sacrifice of British faith and honour. Mr. Fox stigmatized the speech of Mr. Dundas as mean and shuffling; and intimated, pretty broadly, that, in lamenting the miseries of war, Mr. Wilberforce had been canting and hypocritical. The treaties referred to formed an offensive alliance, a mode of confederacy which was now given up in Europe. The last he remembered was the family compact, which France, under an improved government, had renounced. In the present hostilities, success and defeat would, to us, be equally calamitous. Mr. Pitt controverted some of the assertions of Mr. Fox and Major Maitland. Lord Fielding and the Solicitor-general opposed the resolutions, which were finally negatived without a division; Mr. Dundas having promised, at an early opportunity, to move others of an import directly contrary.

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Mr. Fox.

Mr. Pitt.

Without an introductory speech, Mr. Dundas moved three resolutions, expressing the opinion of the House that the aggression of Tippoo had rendered the war necessary, and its approbation of the course which had been pursued. After a long debate, in which former assertions and arguments were reproduced, but little added, the resolutions passed.

March 2nd.
Motion of
Mr. Dundas.

Proceedings analogous to those of the Commons took place in the House of Lords, where Lord Porchester moved a series of resolutions resembling those of Mr. Hippisley and Mr. Francis, supporting them by a speech of considerable ability. At the eve of the expiration of their charter, when they must liquidate their accounts, he said, the Board of Control applied the wealth of a commercial body in ruinous projects of conquest, whose greatest success might add wasted territories to the state; and, should the Company prove (as they must) unable to answer the demand, the burthen would contribute to the miseries and hasten the ruin of this exhausted country. After a discussion of some duration, the previous question was moved, and

April 11th.
Motion by
Lord Por-
chester.

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Progress of
the war.Earl Corn-
wallis takes the
command.
1790.
Nov. 5th.

6th.

Dec. 6th.

1791.
Jan. 29th.

the original motion lost on a division*. Lord Grenville then proposed the same resolutions which had been submitted to the other house by Mr. Dundas; and, on a division, they were acceded to†.

While the attention of Parliament was thus engaged, the war proceeded with activity and vigour. Earl Cornwallis had now determined to take on himself, in person, the command, and had communicated his intention by a minute in council, in which he described the late proceedings in the field; and, while he paid a due tribute to the skill and bravery of General Medows and other officers, declared his resolution to be chiefly founded on the confidence which his presence would impart to the allies in the sincerity of existing engagements, and the consequent discredit of false, though colourable, representations which might be made by the enemy. A minute of approbation, and a resolution to support his exertions, were entered on the proceedings‡.

Aware of this intention, General Medows had restrained his operations, and, renouncing all thoughts of invading the enemy's country, concentrated his forces in the Carnatic, ordering his supplies to Trichinopoly. The state of the season, the fall of rain, the swell of rivers, beside the difficulties attending the equipment and removal of great bodies of men in India, protracted the period of the Governor's effectual commencement of operations. He proceeded by sea from Calcutta to Diamond Harbour, and thence to Fort St. George with a body of eighteen hundred sepoys, with their military equipments, the stores and draught cattle having been conveyed to the same destination, in admirable order and without loss.

On his arrival, Lord Cornwallis found a new, if not unexpected, difficulty. The tributaries of Great Britain, when they saw Tippoo disposed to invade the Carnatic, refused payment, and some appeared to favour his cause. Some withheld it contumaciously, while others, flying from their homes for protection of

* 96 to 19.

† 64 to 12.

‡ See the minute of council. McKenzie, Appendix, No. 13. vol. i. p. 95.

their lives, alleged, not without appearance of reason, that they could not render tribute for lands which they had tilled, but of which the invader would reap the crops. In many places, tenants could not be procured, lands were uncultivated, and irrigation neglected. These difficulties were overcome by address and resolution; and those who were not convinced by argument were awed into submission by the appearance of troops.

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After a time, which some considered as wasted in indecision, although, in fact, it was most beneficially employed in obtaining reinforcements, providing for the sick, and accumulating stores, the noble commander commenced active operations.

Active hostilities begun.

Delay had, in part, arisen from the proceedings of our allies. Nizam Ally, with a force undoubtedly very large, although its exact amount is not ascertained, but which covered, with ostentatious display, the plains of Hyderabad, took Vanoo and other barrier forts; and, being strengthened by two battalions of Madras sepoys, led by Major Montgomery, and about sixty European artillery-men, under Captain Tutt, besieged, and after a long resistance, took Capool, and afterward Bahauder Bunder. Receiving intelligence of the surrender of Gunjecotta to Hafez Jee, the main force proceeded to that place, and effected a junction. After a considerable halt, and a march of six weeks, they advanced to the siege of Gurrumconda. This fortress was the scene of many vicissitudes; it was taken, then recaptured by Hyder Saheb, a natural son of the Sultan, who distinguished himself by a vigorous and spirited attack, and followed up his success with an unsparing massacre; and finally taken again by Captain Read and Secunder Jaw.

The Nizam.
1790.
May.

Oct. 28th.
1791.
April 18th

May 1.

Nov. 24th.
Dec. 25th.

Meanwhile, the Mahrattas waged war with extraordinary caution. A portion of them, gaining easy possession of Gudgenegur and some other barrier stations, limited their operations, and attempted no more useful exploit. Another division, under Purseram Bhow, aided by two battalions of Bombay sepoys, led by Captain Little, besieged Durwar, and by escalade made

1790.
The Mahrattas.

Sept.

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themselves masters of the lower works; but the thirst of plunder superseding the injunctions of discipline, the Mahrattas fell into confusion, were attacked by the garrison of the upper fort, driven out with great slaughter, and probably none of them would have been saved, but for the bravery and discipline of the men under Captain Little, who had not disgraced themselves like the others. Reinforcements arriving under Lieutenant Colonel Frederick, the fort was surrendered on terms, comprising the protection of property and person; terms which were shamefully violated by the Mahrattas, who indulged, without reserve, their passion for plunder and blood. Purseram Bhow shortly afterwards joined Lord Cornwallis*.

1791.
April 4th.The British
troops.

The advance of General Medows into the Coimbatore district, while it obliged Tippoo to suspend operations of conquest, and provide for the security of his own dominions, enabled the Bombay detachment to remain at Travancore until ordered to relieve the Madras battalions left at Paligautcherry. Colonel Hartley, at the head of one British and two native regiments, attacked, near Calicut, a force of fourteen thousand men, strongly posted, and commanded by Mohul Cawn and Hussein Ally Cawn.

1790.
Sept.

Dec. 10th.

Major-general Abercromby proceeded to the Malabar coast, and received, on his arrival, homage and promises of allegiance from all the native princes, and reduced Cannamore; Biliapatam surrendered, and thus all the rich and fertile districts extending from Deela to Travancore were under the command of England.

Dec.
General Aber-
cromby.Earl Cornwal-
lis.1791.
Feb. 11th.

The Governor-general determined to press forward to Seringapatam, quitted Vellore, and encamped in the neighbourhood of Vellore. Tippoo, deceived by this proceeding, imagined that he meant to enter his dominions by the Barramaul valley, and directed his whole attention to that quarter, offering no obstruction to the British army, in its progress to Vellore, or for

* Narrative of the operations of Captain Little's detachment by Lieut. Edward Moor. c. i. to vi.

three days after they had gained the pass of Muglee, and fixed their head-quarters at Palumnaire.

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Speedily quitting this position, and proceeding toward the town of Bangalore, the enemy's cavalry appeared, and his whole army, led by himself, was soon in view, but attempted no hostility beyond that of burning their own villages and destroying forage to distress the invaders. While the Commander-in-chief was reconnoitring the hill, or town, Colonel Floyd made a gallant attack with his cavalry on the rear of the enemy; it was, at first, successful; but, pursuing his first advantages too far, Tippoo, aided by powerful reinforcements, repelled the attack, and our troops with difficulty effected a retreat, their leader being severely wounded. In the course of the day, three individuals of Tippoo's troops made a daring attempt to assassinate the English commander; it was frustrated by the vigilance of the guards; two of the three were killed; the third owed his life to the mercy of his intended victim; there is no sufficient reason for supposing this act to have been directed by the Mysorean prince; it probably arose from wild enthusiasm, a desire of distinction, or the excitement of intoxication from the use of an herb called bang. The army encamped within random shot of Bangalore, the villages fired by the enemy blazing around in every direction.

1791.

Siege of
Bangalore.
24th.
March 3rd.

5th.

Having, in two days, surmounted considerable difficulties, the troops stormed the pettah, where, fortunately, relying on the strength of the position, the enemy had omitted to destroy the stores. Tippoo made a brave endeavour to expel the English from this important acquisition, but was repulsed with great loss. While batteries were preparing, and other means put forward for assailing the fort, the usual incidents of feints, manœuvres, and simulated and partial attacks took place; the siege was pressed without intermission; a practicable breach was effected, and a vigorous attack in the night, although bravely resisted, put our troops in possession of the fort. Contrary to the humane intention of the commander, and the general practice of the British troops, a fearful slaughter was made by

7th.

21st
its capture.

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the sepoys, in which fourteen hundred are said to have fallen, women and children not being spared in the confusion of battle and the darkness of night. The acquisition of Bangalore established us in the heart of the Sultan's dominions, and with his strongest and most important fortress, were obtained one hundred and twenty pieces of cannon, and ammunition sufficient for a twelvemonth's siege.

Consequences.

An immediate effect of this important capture was the surrender of Darwar, Capool, with several inferior forts, and a display of attachment to the victors in many native powers, extremely discouraging to the Sultan.

Further
proceedings.

The state of affairs in Europe, the probability of a war with Spain in which France might probably join, and the effect to be expected on our Eastern possessions, induced the Governor-general to wish for a termination of the present contest; but as Tippoo had never offered to treat with the allies jointly, and as his present unfavourable circumstances did not abate the loftiness of his spirit or diminish the energy of his resolution, the noble commander continued his original plan. Leaving therefore the conquered city to the care of Captain Patrick Duff, the main body of the army marched to effect a junction with Nizam Ally, with a considerable body of cavalry, at Cottapilly, after the capture of Deonelly the birth place of Hyder Ally, and several unresisting towns. The addition of numerical strength gained by this junction was fifteen thousand cavalry; but their value was reduced by their total disregard of discipline and want of military skill. Thus augmented rather than reinforced, the army returned to Bangalore.

28th.
Junctions with
the Nizam.
April 13th.
Capture of
Deonelly and
other places.

28th.
Earl Cornwallis
advances
toward
Seringapatam.

Earl Cornwallis's attack on Seringapatam was delayed from the difficulty of securing provisions, forage, and draught cattle. By order of the Sultan, the country was laid waste, the villages burnt, the inhabitants removed, and every thing growing upon the ground, which could have afforded sustenance, was burnt; if there were secret hoards of grain, there were no people left to afford disclosures. The sick, half of the officers' tents, and all other things which

April 28th to
May 3rd.

would encumber the army, were sent into Bangalore. Cattle and men were employed in the carriage of ammunition. The troops in general were supplied with rice nearly sufficient to last them to Seringapatam. Colonel Duff, with a powerful battering train, joined the army: platforms for batteries, intrenching tools, and every other necessary article, were satisfactorily provided, and General Abercromby was to bring up the remainder.

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Gopauldroog and some other hill-forts were easily gained, and the army reached the fort of Mallavelly, where they made a short halt, during which the Cauvery river was carefully examined, and, after some disappointments, it was discovered that the ford of Kanambaddy, nine miles above Seringapatam, would allow a passage, of which Hyder Ally had frequently availed himself. The object of this enquiry was to effect a more speedy junction with General Abercromby.

3rd to 13th.

Earl Cornwallis, arriving at the ground he had marked out for his station at Arickery, saw a considerable body of the enemy's troops, advantageously drawn up, with their right to the river, and their left to rugged and, apparently, inaccessible mountains. These troops were at first considered only as a large detachment; but the British commander soon learnt that the whole force of the enemy was assembled, and hailed the fortunate opportunity of bringing him to action. Beside the advantages in his position which Tippoo had selected with consummate judgment, he had the advantage of a great numerical superiority; and his cavalry and bullocks were fresh and in full vigour; while those in the British army were weak, dispirited, and worn down by scanty food and unintermitted labour.

14th.
Advance of
Tippoo.

Earl Cornwallis planned a circuitous movement, for the purpose of surprising the enemy in his strong camp, or at least of placing himself more on an equality with him in point of ground. At the head of six European regiments and twelve battalions of native infantry, with thirty-six field-pieces, a regiment of dra-

Battle of
Arickery.

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1791.

15th.

16th.

18th to 28th.
Difficulties of
Earl
Cornwallis.

goons, and three of the best regiments of native cavalry, he marched forward at eleven o'clock, in a rainy and stormy night, by the shortest practicable route, toward the hostile camp. The state of the weather, the badness of the ground, and the wretched condition of the draught cattle, so retarded their progress, that, at day-break, they had advanced only a few miles; and, at eight o'clock, when they reached the brow of a hill, which afforded a full view of the enemy's line, they were also descried, and the whole camp was speedily put in motion. Although taken by surprise at the sight of his adversaries advancing by an unexpected route, the Mysorean did not decline a battle. It was well fought and obstinately contested. Steadiness and discipline enabled the British troops successively to drive the enemy from all their strong positions, and compel them to seek refuge under the strong batteries which protected Seringapatam, while the victors, having lain on their arms for the night, were supplied with tents from Arickery in the morning, and established their camp just beyond the reach of the batteries, and partly on the field of battle. The cavalry on either side effected little; the ground was unfavourable, and those of the Nizam, by an awkward, ill-concerted movement, exposed themselves to destruction, and impeded the operations of their allies. The loss in the British force was but small*; that of the enemy must have been very considerable; four guns, many standards, and three thousand stand of arms left on the ground, attest its magnitude, although precise accounts were not obtained.

After a halt of two days, which all circumstances rendered necessary, the British commander moved forward, to execute his original plan of crossing the river at the ford of Kanambaddy, for the purpose of joining the Bombay army, under General Abercromby; soon, however, he was convinced, by the miserable state of the draught cattle, that he could not move his heavy train so as to act with any effect in a siege; scarcity

* 25 killed, 94 wounded; but this includes the British regiments only.

pressed heavily on his forces,—the followers of the camp, amounting to four times the number of the effective troops, aggravated this difficulty; the battering train consisted of three twenty-four and eight eighteen-pounders, and the provisions, being distributed in equal shares, were found barely sufficient to last until, by easy marches, they could fall back to Bangalore. This movement, however necessary, was a grievous disappointment to the Bombay army, whose spirits had been raised by the hope of co-operating in the reduction of Tippoo's capital, who had heard the cannonade during the late battle, and had fired a salute in honour of the victory. They acquiesced in the order, and retreated unmolested, although a large force, under Cummer ul Dien, appeared and reconnoitred in their front.

When Earl Cornwallis had commenced his retrograde movement, he learned, with surprise, the near approach of the Mahratta armies, amounting to thirty thousand men, commanded by Purseram Bhow and Hurry Punt Furhya. Thus were three hostile armies encamped within seven miles of Seringapatam; but although the fear of scarcity was partially removed*, yet, as nothing could be attempted until the falling of the Carwery to a low state, and until the monsoon, the return and duration of which had not been accurately calculated, should have passed, the retreat to Bangalore was persisted in, and the armies, moving so as to occasion no fatigue, arrived unmolested.

During the retreat, Earl Cornwallis shewed much skill and judgment in appreciating and conciliating the Mahrattas. Having learned from their chiefs that the Peishwah's commands and their own inclinations equally led them to attend, with implicit obedience, to his directions, he forbore to make any complaints of the lateness of their arrival, to which, more than any other cause, he attributed the disappointment of his hopes in the campaign; indeed, he found,

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Retreat to
Bangalore.

26th.
Approach of
the Mahrattas.

July 11th

* The Mahrattas had provisions sufficient to afford a good supply; but they produced them very sparingly, enhanced the prices exorbitantly, and depreciated the coin in which they were paid, so as to make the extortion enormous.

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on explanation, that the Mahratta chiefs had been very assiduous in attempts to correspond with him; but, through the well-judged vigilance of the Sultan, aided perhaps by some treachery in their own agents, not one of their dispatches had been received. They yielded readily to his advice respecting the passes by which they ought to maintain communication with their own country, and, by an activity and spirit of enterprize, much superior to the troops of the Nizam, gained copious supplies from the adjacent districts.

July.
State of
Tippoo.

26th.

27th
He sends a
flag of truce.

At this period, a feeling of alarm seems to have been increasing among Tippoo's subjects. They considered the attack on his capital suspended, but only for a short time; and he endeavoured to re-animate, or at least tranquillize them, by exhibiting rejoicings for a victory by Sayed Saib, which had never been gained. He sent also a flag of truce, accompanied with a present of fruit and vegetables, and proposals for accommodation, to Earl Cornwallis; but the present was returned untouched, and it was still declared that no negotiation could be entered upon unless the proposals came addressed to the confederacy, and until a general release of all the British subjects in the Mysorean dominions was granted. Tippoo denied that any British prisoners were detained, and objected to a truce, which had been proposed as a necessary preliminary.

British pri-
soners found at
Hooliandroog.

Meanwhile the allies captured and dismantled a fort of great strength, called Hooliandroog, where they obtained a supply of grain and cattle, and liberated a number of English prisoners. These unhappy victims were bound in chains of various constructions, and had their limbs separated, or compressed by various contrivances, they standing erect; and, having been confined in this state of torture for about ten years, the greater part of them had lost the power of some of their limbs.

Without interruption from the enemy, the allies possessed themselves of several other forts. On the capture of Oussore, Major Gowdie discovered that, to conceal the falsity of his assertion, that no British prisoners remained in his hands, Tippoo had commanded the

murder of three English officers: his orders were strictly, although reluctantly obeyed; but a manuscript, left by one of them, placed the fact beyond the possibility of a doubt*.

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For the supply of indispensable necessities, Tippoo, hemmed in on every side, found himself obliged to undertake some enterprize. Bednore alone had escaped the ravages of one or the other party, and Coimbatore appeared to be an eligible point of attack. The allies did not consider it as a position tenable against artillery and disciplined troops, but defended it as a check to the progress of the Sultan. During a siege of long duration, in which a large body of troops was employed, many summonses to surrender were received, some containing lofty threatenings, others proposing merciful terms. They produced no effect; the assailants were repulsed in their efforts to carry the place by storm, and, by a resolute sally of the besieged, aided by some co-operation from without, were driven from all their works with tremendous defeat. Yet Tippoo, with his accustomed perseverance, renewed the siege with an overwhelming force, under Cummer ul Dien. The garrison exhausted all the efforts of skill and bravery in their defence; but a corps, under Major Cuppage, having failed in an attempt to raise the siege, a capitulation was agreed to. The terms were liberal, but they were shamefully violated; the officers, instead of being sent to a British post, according to agreement, were, after indignities had been exhausted on them, and after an imprisonment of many days, marched to Seringapatam.

Tippoo
besieges
Coimbatore.

May 1.

Aug. 11.

Oct.

Which is
taken.

Nov. 3.

During this period, the attack of the capital was carefully arranged. Provisions and treasure, bullocks and elephants, with a large reinforcement of heavy artillery and men, directed by British officers, advanced unmolested through a portion of the Mysore territory, and arrived safely at Bangalore. The capture of the hill-forts being deemed indispensable, Major Gowdie's brigade, strengthened by a detachment of artillery,

August.
Exertions of
the allies.

September.
Capture of
hill-forts.
Sept. 13.

* Mackenzie, vol. ii. p. 118.

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Nundydroog.

22nd.

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with cannon and mortars, under Major Montagu, and a force of sepoy under Captain Reid, summoned, and, on a refusal to surrender, easily captured Raymanghun; while Ambagydurgumi and Chillumcottah threw open their gates on the first summons. Nundydroog, a fort of great strength, presented a resistance so formidable, and the protracted siege was attended with such a variety of events, that Earl Cornwallis himself came to examine whether or not the enterprize should be abandoned. Having determined to persevere, and drawn his whole force into the neighbourhood of the droog, an assault by moonlight took place, under his direction. The enemy made a determined resistance; their small arms were employed with great effect; the air being illuminated by their blue lights enabled them to direct with certain aim their discharges of musketry and rockets; while huge stones rolled down the hill increased the destruction of the assailants. At length valour and discipline triumphed; they possessed themselves of all the breaches, while the besieged sought for safety by flight, or in the principal Pagoda, or wherever else hope or fear shewed or suggested a refuge. When day exhibited to view the strength of the position, the victors stood astonished, and almost appalled at their own success.

Success of
Tippoo.

In various quarters, further successes attended the allies, slightly counterbalanced by a victory gained by a detachment of Tippoo's army. Under the command of Bunker Saib, this force entered the Barahmahl valley, spread alarm among the parties stationed there, and menaced the convoys which were approaching Amboor from fort St. George. They carried a considerable plunder to Penagra, a mud fort, near the south end of the valley. The Commander-in-chief having detached Lieutenant-colonel Maxwell with a British regiment and two native battalions, he, by a regular summons, demanded the surrender of Penagra; but the enemy refused, and fired on the flag. The place was taken by storm, and the defenders suffered severely for their violation of the recognized usages of war. The colonel next attacked Kistnaghery, a place of

Capture of
Penagra.

much greater strength; but the enemy making a brave and well-sustained resistance, he was obliged to retreat with considerable loss, including several valuable officers. Notwithstanding this failure, he finally drove the invaders out of the Barrahmahl and neighbouring districts, and returned to the grand army.

Earl Cornwallis, still deficient in cavalry for the conquest of Seringapatam, attacked some other hill-forts, as well to be useful in his operations on the capital, as to inspire confidence in the natives and facilitate the transport of supplies. Tippoo obtained some slight advantages over parties of Mahrattas; but they made no compensation for the losses he frequently sustained, and particularly for the success which attended some operations at sea.

Captains Sutton, Trowbridge, and Osborn, commanding the ships *Minerva*, with the *Thomas* and *Vestal* frigates, summoned a small and well-fortified island, about a mile from the main land, in the latitude of Onore, where a magazine was formed, and large quantities of stores accumulated; the enemy, relying on the strength of their defences, derived from nature and art, and having on their batteries forty pieces of cannon, refused at first; but the terror inspired by the appearance of our ships, and some judicious manœuvres of the marines who landed, induced them to yield up the place, with all its stores. Shortly afterward, an event happened, which, if France had been prepared, would probably have occasioned a naval war. The *Resolu*, a frigate of thirty-six guns, commanded by M. St. Felix, was convoying two merchant vessels toward the port of Mangalore, when Sir Richard Strahan, by command of Commodore Cornwallis, examined the cargoes. While the boats were employed in this service, the commander of the *Resolu*, sheering along side, fired one round of all her guns into the *Phoenix*, without any previous communication. Sir Richard instantly raked the Frenchman fore and aft; and, continuing his advantage, the *Resolu*, after fighting for about an hour, struck, but not until the *Perseverance* had joined in the engagement. Upward of

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Nov. 7.

Earl Corn-
wallis again
advances.

Slight naval
action.

Oct. 11.

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Nov. 30.
Savandroog
taken.

Dec. 21.

Other forts
surrender.

Dec.
Operations of
Purseram
Bhow.

fifty men were killed and wounded on each side. The frigate was delivered over to the commandant of Mahé; and the trading ships, containing no warlike stores, were permitted to proceed on their voyage.

Savandroog, having been surveyed by the noble commander in person, was now deemed assailable. This immense rock rises upward of half a mile perpendicular, out of a country every where broken by deep ravines into rugged precipices; it is embraced all around by walls and fortifications. Toward the top, it is separated by a frightful chasm into two huge masses, each of which is strengthened by distinct works. Thick belts of bamboo and thorny bushes encircle its base, which is eight miles in circumference; and, as if intended by Nature to strengthen the whole, one impenetrable jungle, extending from thence in every direction, forms a barrier no where short of five miles in depth. For the conquest of this fort, three Bengal regiments and a troop of cavalry were selected. An incessant and well-conducted battery soon effected a practicable breach, the assault was made, and, partly through the skilful arrangements of the Commander-in-chief, partly through the terror felt by the enemy, this difficult conquest was achieved, without the loss of a man; only two were wounded. Ramghur and Sheriaghery surrendered without a struggle. Outradoog made some resistance, but was conquered after a smart attack, distinguished by one novel circumstance. The enemy had let loose a number of wild bullocks to cover their retreat; these quadruped allies acted with great effect, overturning upwards of thirty men, and tossing some into the air, who were grievously hurt. Large quantities of provisions and military stores were the fruit of these conquests.

Awaiting the cessation of the monsoon, the British were employed in recruiting, equipping, and remounting their cavalry; the troops of Tippoo made some bold and successful incursions into the Carnatic; but all our operations converged toward the attack on Seringapatam. Purseram Bhow, aided by Captain Little's detachment, effected some important achievements in the district of Bednore. The temptation to

invade this territory was to him irresistible, although he endangered the intended movements of Lord Cornwallis, and neglected his promise to form a junction with General Abercromby. Without difficulty, he made himself master of the fort of Hoolyonore; the garrison of Bankipore, in terror, voluntarily surrendered. Simoga, encouraged by the support of a covering army, about three thousand strong, under the Nabob Reza Sahib, resisted; but Captain Little, at the head of one thousand Bengal sepoys, aided by Appa Sahib with the same number of infantry, having attacked, and, after a severe conflict, totally routed, this covering army, the fort of Simoga surrendered*.

For the reduction of Seringapatam, all the means possessed by the allies were brought into action. The British force under General Abercromby, aided by a body of horse from the Rajah of Travancore, amounted to nearly ten thousand effective men, with a powerful train of artillery, and a good supply of cattle for draught and carriage; but they did not, for some time, join the main body. The army of Earl Cornwallis, calculated at eleven thousand Europeans and thirty-one thousand natives, with nearly two hundred cannon, formed one extensive encampment, separated by the jungles into three great divisions, the British portion of which was reviewed, preparatory to being drawn out into action, in presence of their allies. The troops advanced on the following day, and, after taking some forts, came in sight of the capital. In addition to double walls and ditches, it was strengthened on more than two-thirds of its circumference by the river Cauvery, which, separating into two branches at the western extremity, washed the skirts of the glacis on either side. In the centre of the island, at a distance of about a thousand yards from the fort, stood a pettah, constructed with much regularity, and surrounded by a lofty mud wall; and toward the eastern extremity, where the branches of the river re-unite, a rich garden, decorated with lanes of cypress, intersecting each other at right angles, added splendour to a superb palace, which was further adorned by several adjacent buildings of great magni-

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19th.

29th.

1792.

Jan. 2.

Siege of
Seringapatam
formed.

Jan. 31.

Feb. 5.

* Lieutenant Moor's Narrative, c. 12.

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Conduct of
Tippoo,

6th.

Night attack
on the camp.

7th.

ficence. On the northern bank of the river, an encampment, secured by a chain of six well-constructed redoubts, was defended on the right by works thrown up on the Carigat hills. On the island, batteries strengthened with bastions and fletches, ranging along the river, formed a second line of protection, of great strength; and a bound hedge, with a deep nulla, ran along in front of the whole. Beside these defences, soft paddy fields and deep ravines gave additional security to the position in which the Sultan determined to defend his capital. On this spot had his father defeated a confederacy against him*; and from this spot had the present invaders retreated the preceding year.

Confiding in the strength of his position, the Sultan had permitted the approach of his enemies without opposition; but, on the very night after their arrival, the grounds of his confidence were put severely to the proof. In a calm, serene, moonlight evening, between the hours of eight and nine, the allied troops were put in motion. As their only hope was in a surprise, the conveyance of artillery was not attempted; but reliance was chiefly placed on the bayonet. The camp was defended by about forty thousand infantry, beside a large body of cavalry, while to the attack were destined two thousand eight hundred Europeans and five thousand eight hundred natives, formed into three columns; the right composed of two European and five native battalions, under General Medows. The centre, of three European and five native battalions, led by the Commander-in-chief; and the left, of one battalion of European, with three of native troops, under Colonel Maxwell. When day appeared, Tippoo found himself driven from his fortified camp, while his enemies were in possession of half the island. He made gallant efforts to retrieve his losses; first, he endeavoured to regain Paul Pang, at the western extremity; but, finding Colonel Stuart too strongly posted to permit a hope of success, he dispatched a body of troops to reoccupy a redoubt on the northern side of the Cauvery, called the Sultan's redoubt. They were twice repulsed; but the British troops having exhausted their ammunition,

* In 1767.

despaired of sustaining a third assault, when, most fortunately, two bullocks, laden with cartridges, were discovered in the ditch, whither they had strayed in the night. This supply enabled the defenders of the post again to repel the enemy, and the Sultan, foiled in all his efforts, withdrew his troops from the northern side of the island, and prepared to defend the fort, the only place of consequence remaining in his possession*.

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Tippoo now appeared inclined to treat for peace; but, both from his general character, and from particular circumstances, suspicion was entertained that his real intent was only to gain delay, in hopes that by reuniting his scattered forces, he might yet again try the chances of war. He forwarded to the British commander a proposal to open a negotiation; and, having received an answer reproaching him with the violation of treaties, particularly that which was made on the surrender of Coimbatore, and demanding the instant liberation of the prisoners who were then taken, and particularly of Lieutenants Chalmers and Nash, he released those officers, and confided to them letters for the Commander-in-chief, intreating them to return with answers.

Tippoo proposes to treat.

13th.

16th

Earl Cornwallis, still pressing the siege, was joined, after some ineffectual opposition from the enemy, by General Abercromby, with six thousand highly disciplined men, of whom one-third were Europeans. Although the approach of Tippoo's Vakeels, who were now in daily conference, caused some interruptions in the firing, they were only occasional, and sufficient to shew respect; and the Commander-in-chief, after carefully reconnoitring the fortress, and ascertaining the most probable means of success, formed his plan of operations. Much skirmishing was occasioned by the efforts of the besiegers to perfect their works, and some spirited attempts of the enemy to obstruct them. The progress of the siege reduced the Sultan to a desperate extremity. He was surrounded on almost every side, and the arrival of Purseram Bhow, who was expected with his army, would have closed up the only remaining avenue. Major Cuppage, from the Coimbatore

Progress of the siege.

15th.

* For ample and circumstantial details, see Mackenzie, vol. ii. p. 184.

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country, with a brigade of four hundred Europeans, and three battalions of sepoys, had ascended the Guzlehatty pass; and, without difficulty, would take the forts of Ardinelly and Mysore as he advanced. General Abercromby had perfected a line of communication with the Malabar coast, whence supplies were constantly arriving: arrangements were made for providing the Mahratta and Hyderabad armies from their own countries; and the Brinjarries maintained unprecedented abundance in the camp of Lord Cornwallis.

Preliminaries
signed.

24th.

Under these inauspicious circumstances, hopeless of aid, and doubtful of the permanent fidelity of those around him, when pressed by famine and calamity, Tippoo was obliged to submit, and signed preliminaries of peace dictated by the conqueror.

The treaty.

The treaty, comprised in five articles, stipulated that one half of the dominions which Tippoo had possessed before the war should be ceded to the allies; that he should pay—part immediately, and the residue within a year—three crores and thirty lacks of rupees, (£4,125,000); that two of his three eldest sons should be given as hostages, and all prisoners of the four powers from the time of Hyder Ally should be unequivocally restored.

Tippoo's sons
given as
hostages.

Delay and hesitation on the part of Tippoo still occasioned doubts of his sincerity; but finally the hostages arrived, and a speedy and effectual termination was hoped. Of the two children thus delivered up, the elder, Abdul Calick, was about ten; the younger, Moosa ul Dien, about eight years of age. They were received with all possible honours. That part of the line, which lay in their way, complimented them under arms; and as they approached head-quarters, a salute of nineteen guns from our parks was answered by an equal number from the fort. Earl Cornwallis met them beyond the cords of his tent with dignified courtesy; and after some conversation, having presented a gold watch to each, conducted them to their elephants, and returned the visit at their own tents on the following day. These princes shewed a degree of cultivated education infinitely above any that had been displayed by our allies; their demeanour evinced a

sense of misfortune, but unaccompanied by any sullenness or selfish depression; they answered compliments in a firm and noble manner, and each, with princely grace, offered to the English commander a rich Persian sword, in return for which he presented the elder with a fusée, the younger with a pair of pistols; but no further reception of presents was permitted. The satisfaction of the father at the kind reception of his sons was testified by a royal salute from his batteries.

Still, notwithstanding all these appearances, notwithstanding the inestimable deposit which guaranteed his good faith, the Sultan shewed signs of insincerity, which almost provoked a renewal of hostilities. In pure reliance on the final execution of the terms agreed on, all operations on the British side were discontinued, and some of the troops dispatched to a distance; but the labours of additional fortification and the accumulation of military supplies in the fort were never intermitted. The agents of Tippoo consumed time by every species of chicane. The portions of territory to be ceded, their locality and importance in the hands of the powers to whom they were destined, were sedulously discussed; even in paying the first sum, according to the preliminaries, a paltry fraud was attempted, by putting a false value on the pagodas which were tendered. Such conduct left no doubt that efforts were making to gain advantages from the sufferings of the military and the probable decay of their besieging materials; and, if possible, to keep the treaty in a lingering state, until the monsoon should render operations impracticable.

Penetrating into these designs, the noble Commander-in-chief resumed an offensive attitude. The guns, which had been withdrawn, were replaced on the lines and in the redoubts; the princely hostages were directed to proceed forward to Bangalore, and the Mysorean soldiers, who were permitted to continue in their train, were disarmed and treated as prisoners of war; troops, under General Abercromby and Purseram Bhow, were judiciously posted so as completely to surround the fortress. The Sultan's ambassadors, justly estimating these demonstrations, waited on him,

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Insincerity
of Tippoo.

March 11th.
Consequent
proceedings of
Earl
Cornwallis.

14th

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Definitive
treaty.

20th.

Observations.

and through their remonstrances he assumed a submissive tone; the hostile preparations were suspended, the hostages were reconducted to their former position, and, after some more useless delays, the definitive treaty was delivered to Earl Cornwallis, and separate parts to each of the allied powers.

Thus, contrary to some parliamentary predictions, and to the relief of fears occasioned by the British commander's retreat, terminated this conflict, reluctantly undertaken by England, dangerous during some portion of its progress, but pursued with vigour, skill, and judgment, to final success. The immediate benefits are not to be calculated by the receipt of money or the acquisition of territory, but by the weakening of a foe, whose avowed and inveterate hostility would render him, under any circumstances, dangerous; while, at the same time, he was not degraded to the state of a second-rate chief; but, by the diminution of his dominions and additions to those of other princes, a just and useful balance of power was established. It was no small achievement to have broken the measures and reduced the power of such an opponent as the Sultan of Mysore. When he was constrained, a British officer observes, to fight his own battles unaided, it was expected that he would fall an easy conquest to such a powerful confederacy; but, under every unpropitious event, in a continued series of ill-fated operations during a two-years' war, he supported himself in a manner that astonished even those who had the best means of knowing the probable state of his army and treasury*.

* Lieutenant Moor's Narrative, p. 199. I have not cited separate authorities for each of the events related; it would have been useless, for the facts in general are told in unvaried terms. I have followed the authorities already cited, and derived information from Major Dirom's narrative; Malcolm's Political History of India, particularly vol. i. c. 2; and, as to the treaty, vol. ii. Appendix, No. i.; Mill's History of British India, and all the periodical and contemporary writers; particularly Earl Cornwallis's dispatches, and a Letter to the Court of Directors, and a pamphlet entitled "Observations on that Letter."



